



THE LIBRARY
OF
THE UNIVERSITY
OF CALIFORNIA
RIVERSIDE



A HISTORY OF
THE IRISH PARLIAMENTARY PARTY

VOLUME I.



Walter L. Collins, Ph. Sc.

F. Hugh P. Donnell

A HISTORY OF THE IRISH PARLIAMENTARY PARTY

VOLUME I.

BUTT AND PARNELL: NATIONHOOD
AND ANARCHY

THE CURSE OF THE AMERICAN MONEY

BY

Frank
F. HUGH O'DONNELL, M.A., Q.U.I.

FORMERLY M.P. FOR GALWAY AND DUNGARVAN

EX-MEMBER OF COUNCIL OF HOME RULE LEAGUE OF IRELAND

EX-VICE-PRESIDENT OF HOME RULE CONFEDERATION IN GREAT BRITAIN

EX-PRESIDENT OF GLASGOW HOME RULE ASSOCIATION

WITH PORTRAITS AND OTHER ILLUSTRATIONS

LONGMANS, GREEN, AND CO.
FOURTH AVENUE AND THIRTIETH STREET, NEW YORK
LONDON, BOMBAY, AND CALCUTTA

1910

DA960
035
v.1

PREFACE

‘BUT for the English, Ireland would be a nation.’ I may fairly class this statement as familiar to all who have heard of Irish politics. ‘Ireland would be a nation, but for the Irish.’ This truth, as fundamental as the former, is at any rate less popular west of the Irish Sea. Yet at no epoch of Irish history since first the Normans and Welshmen of the Plantagenet landed on the shores of Leinster has it ceased for a moment to dominate the situation. The princes of the McCarthys and O’Briens who rushed to fling themselves on their knees before Henry II of England and Anjou, the Irish bishops and abbots who met in council to ratify the Pope’s concession of His Holiness’s Irish island to His Holiness’s *Filius Dilectus* at Westminster, have had an unbroken succession of similar spirits. Our generation has added a variation or amplification to the eternal verities of the past. ‘But for the Irish Americans, Ireland would be a nation.’ The part which the dollars of the comfortable multitudes, oratorically known to Dublin audiences as Our Exiled Brethern, have played in the demoralisation and denationalisation of Irish Ireland—much more than in disaffection anywhere—is apparently unsuspected by the profoundest critics of Irish events who hail from any country outside of Ireland. In Ireland itself the operation of the American dollars has naturally not tended to invite independent criticism, which would mean personal exposures. Yet nothing is more certain than the fact that it has been the American money which destroyed the Home Rule of Isaac Butt, just as it has filled, or partially filled, the collecting carpet-bags of

every emissary of the mechanical majorities that have misrepresented Ireland since a quarter of a century.

The chapters descriptive of the origins of the Home Rule movement had to summarise causes and the working of causes far before the times of the actual supporters of Mr. Butt's programme of policy. Remembering that this book is addressed to English readers at least as much as to Irish ones, the careful study of these historical preludes of the modern history of the Irish Parliamentary party will assist in facilitating correct judgments on subsequent persons and events. The Disfranchisement Act of 1829 which stopped the grant of leases to tenants was the source of the worst of later evils in the rural districts. Men of to-day, bred in the belief that Irish landowners were a cross between fools and demons, will hardly understand O'Connell's testimony, that 'on the whole, the Irish landowners did their duty by their countrymen during the famine,' unless it be realised that the famine evictions were not the work of the Irish landlords, but of the Quarter-Acre Clause of the Parliament at Westminster.

The connexion of Mr. Butt's Home Rule with the independent parliamentarianism of Grattan and the patriots before the Act of Union, and the absolute dissimilarity of both Grattan's and Butt's policies from what is called Gladstonian Home Rule, may be a recommendation for the latter, but forms a fundamental consideration in any case. Gladstonian Home Rule, which began in the tame submission of Parnell to Mr. Gladstone's ascendancy over Mr. Parnell's party, subsequently involved the piteous destruction of the superseded figure-head, but earned no promise of vitality from that repulsive tragedy of feebleness and baseness. The history of the Parliamentary party from Ireland since the extinction of Parnell was contained in germ in the acceptance of Mr. Gladstone's ultimatum by the majority in Committee-room No. 15.

The true origins of the Active Policy, which sank to

Obstruction, but which was founded as Intervention and something more, will be as new as they are incontrovertible. The revelations in the pages concerned with the narrative of what occurred behind the scenes of Parnellism and Crime should provoke serious inquiries and the rejection of some astute falsehoods.

From the very first intimately associated with, or advantageously placed to observe, all the most important leaders and leading adherents of the parties and movements between 1870 and 1895 in particular; long resident in the great capitals of Europe and acquainted with their politicians and diplomatists; I had opportunities of exact information, which have never been enjoyed by any previous writer on recent Irish affairs. Unaccustomed to disguise my convictions and incapable of disrespecting the honest opinions of others, I write as a Nationalist who maintains the whole of the rights of my country; but who equally recognises that Englishmen are patriots, and that, through causes that can hardly be called Irish, freedom of speech and opinion is more frequently found outside of Ireland than within it.

With regard to much of this history, as I am addressing a new generation, it may be well to remind or inform the public that in the height of my political influence and popularity in Ireland, I deliberately rejected that position rather than accept the programme of the Land League and the dishonour of the American money. I abandoned the double distinction to advisers and allies of Ministers of the Crown.

F. HUGH O'DONNELL.

LONDON, *March* 1910.

CONTENTS

OF

THE FIRST VOLUME

	PAGE
CAUSES AND ORIGINS OF THE HOME RULE MOVEMENT	
CHAPTER I	
THE CAUSES OF THE HOME RULE MOVEMENT	
The Causes of the Home Rule Movement—From the Fenian Conspiracy to the Act of Union—From the Act of Union to the Fenian Conspiracy	3
CHAPTER II	
THE ORIGINS OF THE HOME RULE MOVEMENT	
Career of Isaac Butt—Federalism better than Repeal—Ireland's Share of Empire—No Single Chamber—Irish Gentry ruined by the Union—Irish Opinion ignored by England	47
CHAPTER III	
PRINCIPLES OF THE HOME RULE MOVEMENT	
Main Principles of the Home Rule Constitution of 1873—No Interference with the Settlement of Land—Sectarian Legislation to be unlawful—Members of Parliament to be Representatives and not Delegates—The Act of Union in the Imperial Parliament—Non- clerical but not Anti-clerical	65
HOME RULE PARTY AT WESTMINSTER: BEFORE THE ACTIVE POLICY	
CHAPTER IV	
THE SESSION OF 1874	
From the Platform of the Conference to the Floor of the House— The Conservatism of the First Home Rule Party—The Disraelian Flippancy towards Ireland—Butt's Great Speech on the Address— Inauguration of the New Policy on an Indian Famine Question in 1874	87

CHAPTER V

PAGE

THE SESSION OF 1875

The Second Session of the Home Rule Parliamentary Party—Mr. Gladstone's Polemics—'Vaticanism,' Mr. James Lowther, and Maynooth—Mr. John Mitchell and Mr. John Martin—The Foundation of Irish Obstruction—Mr. A. M. Sullivan, M.P., is the Founder—Coercion and Obstruction—Isaac Butt in the Fray—Isaac Butt and the Marquis of Hartington—The O'Connell Centenary and an Anti-Butt Intrigue—Enemies of Home Rule in Ireland—Peter Paul Puppert MacSweeney—The Fall of Mr. P. J. Smythe, M.P., and some others 106

CHAPTER VI

THE SESSION OF 1876

Great Activity of the Butt Party—General Indignation in England—The Indignation of the *Times*—Mr. Parnell a Routine Member—Land, Education, and Home Rule Debates—Progress of Amnesty—John Bright's Defence of the Manchester Martyrs—The Constitution of the Confederation 140

THE HOME RULE PARTY AT WESTMINSTER:
THE ADVENT AND ORIGIN OF THE ACTIVE
POLICY

CHAPTER VII

SECRET HISTORY OF THE ORIGIN, METHOD, AND OBJECTS OF
THE NEW POLICY—THE COUNCIL OF THREE AT THE
MORNING POST

The Session of 1877—The Advent of Obstruction—My Return to Parliament—Suggestive Summaries in the British Press upon the Year—The Secret History of the Origin, Method, and Objects of the New Supplement to the Irish Procedure at Westminster—The End of the Fairy Tales—The *Morning Post* as Council Chamber of Irish Retaliation—The Origin of the Active Policy—To promote or avenge Home Rule—A Policy of Universal Intervention—A Policy of Popular Reform and Interracial Alliance—The Indispensable Service of Mr. Adam Kernahan—How Mr. Kernahan popularised the New Policy—Not Westminster but Dublin defeated the Active Policy—A *Lion's Mouth* at Westminster—How I saved Arabi Pasha—England's Alternative 171

CHAPTER VIII

THE SESSION OF 1877—MY RETURN TO PARLIAMENT—THE
TWENTY-SIX HOURS' SITTING—MY TREATY WITH PRESI-
DENT KRUGER

Why £500 to Biggar and Parnell?—Mr. Sheridan Knowles coaches Parnell—Dungarvan—Ridiculous Necessity of Obstruction—South Africa Bill—My Talks with President Kruger—Mr. Biggar and Mr. Chaplin—Encouraging Mr. Courtney 202

THE HOME RULE PARTY AT WESTMINSTER:
 PARNELL ATTACKS BUTT—THE COMING OF
 DAVITT—PARNELL, DAVITT, AND DEVOY
 SUBSTITUTE AGRARIAN REVOLUTION FOR
 HOME RULE

CHAPTER IX

THE SESSION OF 1877: PARNELL UNDERMINING BUTT

The Failing Lion—Parnell's Gallery Play—The Obstructionist
 Craze—Parnell evicts Butt 237

CHAPTER X

SECOND HOME RULE CONFERENCE—FENIAN CONSULTATION—
 AMERICAN FENIANISM ON THE SCENE

The Session of 1878—Butt and Parnell—Butt accepts Activity
 but condemns Obstruction—The Home Rule Conference in January
 —The Jacobins want a County Gentleman—They think they have
 got Him—The Alliance of Rome and London—The Irish Prelates
 hostile to Home Rule—Lord Leitrim's Murder—Famine Memories
 in America—The Beginning of the American-Irish Intervention—
 The Irish Mission to America in 1876—No British Ambassador—
 Then no Washington Government—Parnell admires the Constitu-
 tion of the State of New York—The Clann-na-Gael Mission to Ireland
 —The Joint Conference of the Fenian Brotherhood and the Active
 Party—My Programme—Parnell's Ambiguity—The New Departure
 —Parnell surrenders Home Rule—The Prelude of the Land League . 254

CHAPTER XI

THE SESSION OF 1878: MR. BUTT'S BREAKING HEALTH AND
 HEART—PARNELL CONTINUES DISSENSION—THE TORIES
 AND THE CLERGY

The Session of 1878—The Situation at Westminster—Mr. Parnell's
 Renewed Attacks upon the Home Rule Leader—Mr. Butt's Breaking
 Health and Heart—Russian Policy in the East and the Parnellites—
 Progress of anti-Home Rule Agitation in Ireland—The Tory Govern-
 ment and the Catholic Clergy—The Education Control Concession—
 The Ruin of Education—Two Calamitous Acts—The Intermediate
 Education Act of 1878 and the Queen's-University-Abolition and
 Examining-Board-University Act of 1879—'An Education to pro-
 duce Failures' 286

CHAPTER XII

THE SESSION OF 1879: THE DEATH OF ISAAC BUTT—MR. SHAW,
 M.P., AS CHAIRMAN—THE SKIRMISHING FUND STARTS THE
 LAND LEAGUE—THE LAST ARMY FLOGGING ACT—THE
 FARMERS' ALLIANCE

The Session of 1879—Social Revolution and High Politics—
 The Widening of Divergences—The Death of Isaac Butt—Mr. Shaw
 as Leader—Mr. Parnell throws off the Mask—Increasing Incom-
 petence of the Beaconsfield Government towards Ireland—The
 Skirmishing Fund founds the Land League—Mr. Davitt proclaims
 the Socialist State—Mr. Parnell follows and explains—Preparing
 the General Election in England—The Last Army Flogging Act—The
 Farmers' Alliance 311

BETWEEN THE ACTS: FROM THE PARLIAMENT
OF BEAONSFIELD TO THE PARLIAMENT
OF GLADSTONE

PAGE

CHAPTER XIII

MY POLICY OF INTERVENTION IN BRITISH POLITICS—THE
FARMERS' ALLIANCE

The Policy of Intervention applied to British Agricultural Politics—Operation of the Farmers' Alliance—To drive a Wedge between the English Landlords and the English Tenants—How we emptied sixty Tory Seats at the General Election of 1880 . . . 345

CHAPTER XIV

THE LAND LEAGUE IN 1879—THE AMERICAN FARMERS KILLED
IRISH AGRICULTURE—THE AMERICAN FENIANS BLAMED
THE IRISH LANDLORDS—THE WORK OF THE DOLLARS

The Land League in 1879—An English-bred Factory-hand as Reformer of Ireland—Mr. Lowther's Unconventional Reply—Mr. Davitt on the Parnellite Coalition . . . 365

CHAPTER XV

THE ACT OF UNION THE KNEEL OF IRISH LANDED ESTATE—
THE FOLLY AND THE FALL OF THE IRISH GENTRY

The Land League and the Landowners—The Fall of the Irish Gentry—Four Periods in their Fall—The Disfranchisement in 1829 fatal to Ireland—How the Potato Blight was made Famine—Encumbered Estates and Church Disendowment Acts . . . 395

CHAPTER XVI

WITH £100,000 CONTRIBUTED BY IRISH AMERICA PARNELL
ATTACKS HIS HOME RULE COLLEAGUES AND DISRUPTS
THE HOME RULE PARTY—THE HISTORICAL HOME RULERS
OF GRATTAN AND BUTT—THE AGRARIAN PROLETARIANS
OF THE LAND LEAGUE AND THE *IRISH WORLD FUND*

The Session of 1880—The Parliamentary Development of the Land League—The Collections and the Constituencies—The Irish-American Dollar and the British Electoral Law—Practical Impossibility of Free Elections—The General Election in Britain—The Home Rule Confederation and the Beaconsfield Manifesto—The Farmers' Alliance—Parnell attacks the Home Rule Party—Avowed Revolution and Intended Compromise—Undeception of the Fenians—The Favourite Lieutenants—Parnell makes Russell an M.P. . . 424

FIRST VOLUME

xiii

CHAPTER XVII

PAGE

THE SESSION OF 1880—FAILURE OF CROPS IN IRELAND—THE OPPORTUNITY OF DAVITT AND PARNELL

Land League Sympathisers in Liberal Party and Cabinet—
National Fenians detest Land League—Mr. H. J. Gladstone and
Frank Byrne—Compensation for Disturbance—National Fenians
oppose Parnell—Parnellites and Bradlaughites—The Fourth Party—
Tipperary and Northampton 467

ILLUSTRATIONS

VOLUME I

F. HUGH O'DONNELL (<i>Photogravure</i>)	.	<i>Frontispiece</i>
<i>From a Photograph.</i>		
TO FACE PAGE		
THE IRISH PARLIAMENT HOUSE IN THE EIGH- TEENTH CENTURY (TRINITY COLLEGE TO RIGHT)	.	3
<i>From an old print.</i>		
MR. ISAAC BUTT, Q.C., M.P. (THE FOUNDER OF HOME RULE)	.	47
<i>From a Lithograph.</i>		
THE IRISH CUSTOM HOUSE IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY	.	65
<i>From an old print.</i>		
RIGHT HON. COLONEL KING HARMAN, M.P. (HON. SECRETARY OF FIRST HOME RULE CONFERENCE)	.	87
<i>From a Photograph by Wm. Lawrence.</i>		
MR. J. G. BIGGAR	.	229
<i>From a Photograph by Wm. Lawrence.</i>		
MR. CHARLES STEWART PARNELL	.	255
<i>From a Photograph by Wm. Lawrence.</i>		
MEMBERS OF FIRST LAND LEAGUE CONVENTION (OCTOBER 21, 1879)	.	365
<i>From a Photograph by Wm. Lawrence.</i>		

CAUSES AND ORIGINS OF THE HOME RULE MOVEMENT

- I. THE CAUSES
- II. THE ORIGINS
- III. HOME RULE GUARANTEES AGAINST CON-
FISCATION AND INTOLERANCE



THE IRISH PARLIAMENT HOUSE IN THE 18TH CENTURY.

Trinity College to right.

CHAPTER I

THE CAUSES OF THE HOME RULE MOVEMENT

The Causes of the Home Rule Movement—From the Fenian Conspiracy to the Act of Union—From the Act of Union to the Fenian Conspiracy.

THE following pages principally relate the summary history of the Irish Parliamentary party in that period between 1870 and 1885 which saw the foundation of the Home Rule movement by Mr. Isaac Butt (born 1803, died 1879); the rise and partial development of the active policy between 1873 and 1880; the greater and greater prominence of obstruction as the active policy most intelligible to the bulk of Mr. C. S. Parnell's future supporters; and finally the complete supersession of Home Rule by the ardent spirit of agrarian revolution, incarnated by Michael Davitt as popular incendiary, and accepted by Mr. C. S. Parnell as uncrowned king. There were thus at least three separate and distinct transformations evolved within Mr. Butt's original scheme for the amendment of the relations between Ireland and the Empire; and of these varieties practically nothing remains to-day but the perpetual agitation for agrarian change. Mr. Isaac Butt, in spite of his commanding services, his statesmanlike talent, and his genial and stately advocacy, was rudely hustled from his chair by the makers of Parnellism, who, only twelve years later, were to pull down in turn their own adulated favourite at the behest of Mr. Gladstone and the clergy. My suggestion for a larger policy, both in the Empire and the nation, commanded enthusiastic applause in Dublin, only so long as it could be mistaken for an obstructionist pretext to keep Mr. Speaker out of bed till the arrival of the milkman and the morning letters.

The possibility of uniting the Irish classes and masses in the demand and capacity for self-government had practically vanished as soon as Davitt and Parnell combined in a programme of class expropriation with compensation calculated on the commercial value of the soil as primeval prairie. Mr. Davitt—if it had not been before his time—would probably have deducted the unearned increment implied in the first advent of wind-borne grass-seeds on the first banks of mud and shingle that arose from a palæozoic ocean. Mr. Parnell collapsed less creditably than Mr. Butt, and Mr. John Redmond rules, or does not rule, in his place ; but the tragic comedy of Irish politics remains.

When we say the Irish Parliamentary party, we mean the Home Rule movement as represented in the Imperial Parliament, without forgetting that there are a good many things besides the Irish representative body which went to the Home Rule movement. That Home Rule movement had its immediate causes in two consequences of the Fenian conspiracy, one being the revelation of the immense popularity of the idea of rejection of British law, and the other being the intensity of the feelings of sympathy and anger which were generally excited by the trials and punishment of the prisoners engaged in the conspiracy and the attempt at insurrection. Of course, when I say generally excited, I mean generally excited amongst Irishmen. I do not remember that there was any general exhibition of sympathy or anger among Englishmen at the condemnation of Irish political prisoners to penal servitude for life or long terms of years in the common convict prison along with common convicts of every degree of vileness and brutality. English opinion has been generously excited against similar treatment of Poles, Hungarians, and Italians by various Continental governments, but Ireland was neither in Poland, Hungary, nor Italy ; and a matter of a few leagues or a few hundreds of leagues has made an enormous distinction in moral considerations on many occasions. Probably a good many Englishmen would be fairly astounded to know how moved, and indignant, and furious all sorts

and conditions of people—aldermen, housemaids, school children, university students—became, as we read, or heard read or quoted, ‘the Speeches from the Dock,’ the plain newspaper reports of the last words, mostly calm, solemn acceptance of their doom, of all those stern, proud prisoners before they passed behind the barred doors to their life of pain and shame.

All the most law-abiding classes in Ireland, including vast numbers of persons who afterwards developed various degrees of disaffection at existing conditions, were at the outset blankly incredulous as to there being any Fenian conspiracy outside a few circles of young men in Cork and Dublin. Then, of a sudden, there were Fenians everywhere. With the exception of the clergy and the officials, it seemed as if Ireland had turned rebel again in a single night. The landed gentry also were loyal to the Union of course, but since the Act of Union they had been so separate from the life of Ireland, their views were as natural and as unimportant as they had been for generations. Of course, as events proved abundantly, there never was a conspiracy or an insurrection in any sense which Italians, for instance, or Hungarians would recognise. There was a great web of make-believe, of which Mr. James Stephens and his Centres and subordinates were the spinners and propagandists. There were oath-takings to the Irish Republic ‘now virtually established’ being enacted in nearly every retired or somewhat retired spot all over the land. For civil or peaceful purposes the organisation was really very efficient. I remember borrowing quite a battalion, some 300 Fenians in Galway, from my very kind acquaintance, Centre O’Connor, in order to have a sufficient number of friendly lookers-on at a public lecture, which I expected to be disturbed by some rivals or enemies. They formed a model audience, and those solid ranks of strong young men—Ireland was still to lose a million and a half of her finest sons and daughters since that day—rendered my meeting a most enthusiastic success. When it came to something like war, it was quite another matter. The organisers

were thoroughly unorganised. The regiments missed their marching orders. The captains and the colonels, very many of them veterans of the great Civil War just concluded in America, knew not where to find their soldiers, and the soldiers had neither rifles nor any other sort of weapons. A few thousands of would-be insurgents wandered aimlessly about the mountainous districts for a few days, carefully avoiding, like gallant soldiers, hurting anybody or anything during their excursion, except a few police barracks, which almost invariably proved to be as invincible as Gibaltars to the toy bombardment.

Certainly, as a distinguished general of the United States army stated to me a good many years ago, there were very ugly possibilities under all that disorganisation. There was much disaffection in the British army in Ireland. Some regiments had hundreds of Fenian soldiers. The general had heard the able writer on military history, Mr. G. Hooper of the *Daily Telegraph*, say that for twenty-four hours there was real danger of a surprise of the three chief arsenals in Ireland by several companies of disaffected soldiers, and the distribution of 30,000 stands of arms would have given the conspirators what they wanted most. There was plenty of ground for alarm also in America. Important sections of American society had still the Alabama on their mind, and serious assurances had been made to Fenian leaders. There were nearly half a million of American Irishmen who had smelt powder in the Civil War. Many Americans believed that a foreign war might be the very best way of restoring sentiments of common patriotism between the two sections of the Republic. But these speculations are idle. The thing was a feeble fiasco, and a greater ruin was obviated. What are called popular risings are usually horrible affairs, owing to the lack of discipline and self-control, so that we may say that a bad tyranny is better than a good insurrection. Fenianism, which was ludicrous as a military episode, worked a revolution in politics. Nothing remained as it had been.

What might have been the effect on public opinion in

Ireland of a policy of stately and chivalrous courtesy to the hapless men, who were at least the stainless champions of a national idea, it is needless to speculate. At all events, there was neither generosity nor humanity in the treatment of the Fenian prisoners. Though there was absolutely nothing even remotely connected with vulgar or sordid crime in the whole of the rising, though not a chicken nor a teaspoon was looted by the wandering bands, though not a hayrick was fired in the mansions of the gentry, nor one rude word uttered to any family of official or landowner, a burst of abusive denunciation fell upon the beaten insurgents, whose insurrection was less a rebellion than a protest. Law officers of the Crown were not ashamed to charge with designs of universal massacre the scholars, poets, and journalists who stood in the dock in Green Street courthouse. Leading organs of the London press, which had been notorious or illustrious for their incitements to Hungarian and Italian rebels, wrote of the fallen Fenians as if blasphemy, piracy, together with parricide and the rest of the crimes inside and outside the Decalogue, were all comprised and exceeded in an attitude of disrespect to the Act of Union. Sentence after sentence of indiscriminate atrocity fell upon men of pure aspirations and blameless lives. Handsome, romantic John O'Leary was sent to penal servitude.¹ Clarke Luby, full of the traditions of Trinity College, was sent to penal servitude. Charles Kickham, the refined and observant author of 'Knocknagow, or the Homes of Tipperary,' was sent to penal servitude. A number of ex-officers from the United States, whose lives were indeed the forfeit of their useless swords, protested in vain against the infamy of a felon's punishment. They were sent to penal servitude. And every sentence, which was meant to dishonour the sufferers, cut like a livid insult across the face of the country; and traders behind their counters and young students in their class-rooms writhed with an emotion

¹ Mr. O'Leary, on release from the convict prison, returned to Ireland, where he continued to be regarded as the head of the National Fenians who always opposed and condemned the Land League.

which was never entirely to pass away. The dignity of the Act of Union was appeased when some scores of reckless enthusiasts had been sent to break stones and empty prison slops alongside of the wife-beater, the ravisher, and the obscene brute. But the Irish race remained, disarmed and unforgetting.

And then came the executions at Salford Jail—the Manchester martyrdoms which still have the power to arouse a grim enthusiasm among sea-divided millions of Irishmen or ex-Irishmen between the Nore and San Francisco. As a police-van in Manchester streets was conveying a couple of Fenian leaders to jail for trial, the van had been stopped and the prisoners released by a body of comrades. The only casualty was the accidental death of a police sergeant shot by the bullet which broke the lock of the van and opened the door for the escape. Among the large number of suspects seized by the authorities, a batch of five men were subsequently found guilty of constructive murder as having been members of the assailant party, one of whose members had fired the pistol which broke the door and indirectly caused the death of the police officer. Two of the five were immediately released because, though found guilty, there was not ground to convict them at all ; but though the three others had been included in the same invalidated verdict and in the same batch with the accused whom the Crown had to let out at once, these three others were taken out and hanged by the neck until they were dead ! Every man, however absent or distant, who is actually member of a body of men engaged in an illegal action may be theoretically liable for every illegality committed by any member of the party. Still to hang even one man, when it was quite unknown who had actually fired the fatal shot, would have been a severity of a draconian order. But to execute three, and these three to have been part of the five condemned in the one batch, two of whom had to be released on the spot as evidently innocent victims ; this was something that astounded far more even than it appalled. If a number

of young men at Constantinople had been condemned in a similar way on suspicion of being Young Turks who had released a chief from Abdul Hamid's police ; if even Abdul Hamid's police had admitted that two of the condemned were never there at all, but had persisted all the same in hanging three others sentenced under the same verdict and finding of the court ; we need not speculate long upon what would be the unanimous expression of the opinion of Fleet Street and the Strand. The almost unanimous opinion of Fleet Street and the Strand in 1867, concerning such a matter as the strangulation of three Irishmen or thirty Irishmen under such circumstances, was something very different. To the present day all those organs of the policy which aims at consolidating the Empire on the negation of Ireland seldom fail to refer with gusto to that great day of their sort of Imperialism which choked the young life out of three Irishmen on no better pretext or reason than 'a quashed finding and a vitiated verdict.' If A, B, C, D, E, being five Englishmen, are condemned by a verdict which is at once admitted to be stupidly false as regards D and E, is it simply conceivable that such a rotted and exploded verdict would be used as grave juridical ground for choking the life out of A, B, and C ? The thing would be judicial murder, and it was judicial murder at Salford Jail in 1867.

At least twice, when I was elected Member of Parliament, I remember that—of course along with 'O'Donnell Abu'—the popular repertory of airs in demand first and foremost included 'God save Ireland.' The words 'God save Ireland !' were a bequest from the Manchester martyrs to that Home Rule movement which was literally rising from their quicklimed grave. One of the condemned young men had closed his protest in the dock against his doom with this cry of courage and defiance which had been taken up and repeated by his comrades. The new Irish leader, Isaac Butt, Q.C., who had defended a large number of the Fenian prisoners at Dublin, wrote a denunciation of the Manchester abomination in the Dublin *Irishman*, and

one of the mordant metaphors on 'the Empire's sword of rope' made the circuit of the Irish world. Mr. T. D. Sullivan, a poet of the *Nation*, adapted the words of the sentenced boy's cry to a popular air, and in every meeting of men of the old race in every climate under heaven, there has been heard since then the passionate chant :—

God save Ireland, said they loudly ;
God save Ireland, said they all ;
Whether on the scaffold high,
Or the battlefield we die,
What matter, if for Erin dear we fall !

If Whig historians recount that 'Lillibulero' sang the Stuarts out of three kingdoms, might it not repay the calculation to inquire out of how much that song of the Manchester martyrs has sung the British Government in Dublin Castle ? It has been the 'Riego's Hymn' of the new policy.

It would be quite useless for me to write this history ; this history would lack its essential significance, if I were to omit or attenuate the significance of Fenianism in reviving all the forces of the Irish protest against the Act of Union. At the same time, it must be understood that the Fenian outburst of fitful flame could not have had its hour of tragic intensity and its long sequel of smouldering fires if the materials of conflagration had not been assembled in abundance. The fuel which fed the Fenian conspiracy and which has never ceased since to nourish the Home Rule movement in all its manifestations ; parliamentary, civic, revolutionary, native, foreign, within the seas, over the seas ; can be summarily, and quite adequately, described as national resentment ; but that national resentment was itself a composite result of antecedents and occurrences, all centred in the Act of Union as the source or object of their existence. There can be no doubt that the British politicians of every school which desires to suppress Irish nationality have chosen the right designation in calling themselves Unionists. The Act of Union had created the

whole of the Irish opposition, violent or constitutional, which, revived to new energy by the spectacle and the example of the Fenian confessors and missionaries, produced alike the parliamentary protest of Butt, the studied hostilities of the new or active policy, the lawless Jacobinism of the Land League, and all the other manifestations, whether criminal or pacific, from San Francisco and Sydney to Cork and Westminster. As this narrative is a narrative of facts, the element of crime, terrible crime, cannot be excluded. It seldom can be excluded from any grave manifestation of human discontent, at Milan, or Moscow, or Constantinople.

Let us analyse the resentment at the Act of Union. I have said it was a composite sentiment. In the first place, it was based on the deliberate conviction of every leader and follower of the Irish Nationalists that the Act of Union was wholly illegal and void from its initial stage, that it had nothing for it but the force of a power outside of Ireland, and that no act of that power or any number of accomplices could make it anything but what it was, is, and ever shall be, wholly illegal and wholly void. 'The ignominy of the Act of Union' was the enthusiastically applauded phrase applied to it in the Home Rule Foundation Conference by Mr. Ronayne, M.P., the Nationalist representative for Cork, and one of the most popular leaders of opinion in Munster. Englishmen should try to grasp this feature of the situation. Unless they understand it, they must fail to understand why many English undertakings made with most influential and authoritative Irishmen were found to be destitute of influence and authority.

I call a witness, an English witness, an English witness of the highest competence and distinction. Lord Rosebery will explain what Irishmen mean by 'the ignominy of the Act of Union.' Lord Rosebery is an Imperialist, and the best of Imperialists. He knows all the rights of Great Britain to be the predominant partner. His testimony to what the Act of Union was in its inception and making will prepare us for the consideration of its working and effects.

The great and representative assembly which founded the Irish Parliamentary and Home Rule party in the November of 1873 applauded the denunciation of 'the ignominy of the Act of Union,' just as Nationalists do to-day and will continue to do, because (1) the question of the Union had not been put before the Irish constituencies at the preceding election of the Irish Parliament in 1797 ; because (2) the Irish Parliament as elected was thoroughly hostile to the project and had rejected it in 1799 ; because (3) the constitution of the existing Parliament had been arbitrarily altered without a general appeal to the constituencies ; because (4) that arbitrary alteration had been effected by the agency of the two vilest crimes against all laws and constitutions, shameless corruption and brutal intimidation ; and because, (5) even if those invalidating reasons had not existed, the Irish Parliament was absolutely incompetent and impotent to alienate the fundamental right of the Irish nation. 'A Parliament can make laws, but cannot unmake the nation which makes the Parliament.' Upon all these points Lord Rosebery is our witness.¹

¹ Whether through a natural tenderness as Pitt's biographer or a sort of complicity as Pitt's successor, Lord Rosebery appears to swerve considerably from the historical as well as the moral position in some palliatory, if not exculpatory, remarks upon corruption, 'as the ordinary daily life of Dublin Castle,' which is true, and also as 'the everyday life and atmosphere of Irish politics,' which is quite erroneous as regards the non-English side of Irish politics before the Act of Union as well as subsequent to its perpetration. The policy and programme of the patriot party were aimed at the whole practice and machinery of this overseas corruption. The rotten boroughs, the placemen list, had no more to do with Irish patriotic policy in the eighteenth century than had the quartering the King's mistresses, a Countess of Orkney or a Duchess of Kendal, upon the Irish Crown revenues. The attempt to excuse the English Government on the ground of the corruption of certain elements of English origin and maintenance in the Irish parliamentary system appears to be curiously identical with the exculpation of a seducer on the ground of the ruin of his victim. The nearest approach possible to an extenuation of the English corruption at Dublin was that it was as fetid at Westminster. Lord Rosebery is here also an excellent witness. He quotes (*Life of Pitt*, p. 78) 'an analysis of the House of Commons, dated May 1, 1788, which has been recently discovered among the papers of one of Pitt's private secretaries.' According to that analysis, the 'party of the Crown' is estimated at 185 members out of a total of 483. 'They found it authoritatively declared how deep the gangrene of jobbery had eaten into the House of Commons ; how one member received a large income as turnspit to the King ; and how eight were purchased and nominated by an Indian prince. . . . War loans and war contracts

Upon the non-consultation of the constituencies in Ireland as compared with the Scottish Union of 1707 :—

The Parliament that passed the Scottish Union in 1707 had been elected directly in view of that question, which entirely engrossed the national mind. The Parliament that in 1800 passed the Irish Union had been elected in 1797, with no more reference to the question of the termination of its own existence than to free education or female suffrage.—‘*Life of Pitt*,’ p. 189.

Upon the rejection of the Union project by the Irish Parliament previous to arbitrary and criminal alteration :—

What stands without either shame or palliation was the remodelling, in the autumn and winter of 1799, of the House of Commons after it had rejected the Union propositions.—‘*Life of Pitt*,’ p. 189.

Upon the arbitrary alteration of a section of the Parliament with the object of falsifying the results of the last general election :—

Between the close of the session of 1799 and the beginning of that of 1800, sixty-three seats out of a total of three hundred were vacated. . . . In this way, without a dissolution, the whole complexion and constitution of the House were changed.—‘*Life of Pitt*,’ pp. 189-90.

Upon the crimes which invalidated, or superinvalidated, the alleged passing of the Act of Union :—

Nor is it denied that this Irish Parliament, so wholly without mandate, and probably without power to terminate itself, was practically bribed and bullied out of existence. The corruption was black, hideous, horrible ; revolting at any time, atrocious when it is remembered that it was a nation’s birthright that was being sold. . . . The entire patronage and terror of the Crown were employed to pack Parliament and purchase the patrons of Parliament.—‘*Life of Pitt*,’ pp. 189-90.

Upon the incompetence of the Irish Parliament, of any

swelled the spawn of corruption. . . . Successive ministers and their friends filled their bottomless pockets and found a solid set-off to national dishonour in the pickings of national profusion’ (*Life of Pitt*, p. 60). Even if Dublin corruption were not maintained by Westminster, what of this ?

Parliament in Ireland or anywhere else, to legislate away, even without corruption or intimidation, the national birthright of the nation itself,—which had created the Parliament for its service and not for its assassination, as its trustee and not as its betrayer or huckster ;—upon this question of the innate and supreme right of life of all nations, we have already read Lord Rosebery's declaration that the Irish Parliament was 'without mandate and probably without power' to terminate an existence which belonged to Ireland, and to Ireland alone. An English Parliament which should, for the most virtuous reasons, hand over the national existence of England to Bonaparte or Hohenzollern, would be sent down the Thames without boats and without lifebelts. But the criminality, the abominable invalidity, of all that bribery and menace dispenses us from theoretical inquiries, however indisputable the theory. The vote of the bought or terrorised wretches who made up Pitt's majority in the lawless outrage upon the Irish Parliament possessed exactly the authority, legality, and validity of the bank swindler who passes a forged cheque or the fraudulent trustee who embezzles the fortune of his ward. The lapse of twenty centuries cannot give the force of law any more than the repute of honour to such a transaction. This is the fundamental position of Irish Nationalists in 1910 as in 1873 or 1800.

The resentment against the Act of Union, the deliberate as well as passionate repudiation of its validity, involved much more than indignant loathing and contempt for the packing of the Parliament and for the cynical infamy of the packers. It involved horror and wrath at the massacre and outrage which had preceded and prepared the great corruption, as well as the corruption itself. It involved the so-called rebellion as well as the so-called Union. Within the Home Rule Conference Hall not only the Fenian sympathisers who shared the floor and filled the galleries, but crowds of constitutional and pacific men, men of property, men of scholarship—Sir John Gray, Sir Joseph McKenna, Sir Rowland Blennerhassett, Rev. Professor

Galbraith, Fellow T.C.D.—were thoroughly aware of the bloody game played by Dublin Castle in order to provoke the popular rising which was to be the pretext for legislative extinction. All the awful memories that rang about the chant, ‘Who fears to speak of ’98?’ were as present to the minds of nine men in ten in 1873 as if it were ‘God save Ireland!’ and the story of the Manchester hangings. On every side I saw around me cultured Irishmen who had read what Lord-Lieutenant Cornwallis had written of ‘the ferocity of our troops, who delight in murder,’ of General Sir Ralph Abercrombie’s horrified resignation of his command in presence of the indescribable atrocities of the Government soldiery, of Pitt’s sinister boast to Lord Wellesley before the outburst of the tortured peasantry had lasted a week: ‘You will hear that in Ireland the Jacobins have risen in open war. The contest has at present existed about a week. . . . I trust with the present force and some augmentation from here the rebellion will be crushed before any attempt can be made from France: and we must, I think, follow up such an event by immediate steps for a Union.’ The demons of military lust and murder had been let loose on the pure homes of the Irish peasantry for months, for years, before a pikehead had been shaped and pointed at a village smithy. Not a blow had been struck in the famous insurrection of Wexford until after the troops—just to make a bonfire—had burned down Father John Murphy’s little straw-roofed chapel at Boulavogue. The maddened priest, who had seen the humble House of God go up in the same flames which had already consumed the poor cabins of scores of his parishioners, became the first general of the Wexford rebels; and within a few weeks 50,000 Wexford and Wicklow peasants, who had never heard of Wolfe Tone, but who had been recruited for a rising of wrath by the devilries of the Government regiments, had driven every English soldier out of their country, had captured munitions and artillery, had been enclosed by encircling armies, had been hunted down and massacred in thousands, . . . and had added another pretext for Pitt’s

‘ following up such an event by immediate steps for a Union.’ Lord Rosebery thinks the rising would have been more formidable, only ‘ Ulster held aloof.’ Out of thirty-two Irish counties, at least twenty-seven held aloof. The United Irishmen, mostly ex-Protestant Jacobinisers, were the merest sprinkling of the population. The ultra-Catholic priests and people were not going to back up Wolfe Tone’s silly tamperings with Robespierre, while the French scaffolds were still wet or moist with the holiest blood of sanctuaries and convents. Not a life would have been lost to Ireland in 1798, if there had not been, in the words of Lord Rosebery himself, ‘ an organised persecution to drive the Catholics ’ out of a whole province, if all other evils had not been ‘ aggravated by the enrolment of the yeomanry, an undisciplined and uncontrollable force,’ if what the judicious Lecky calls ‘ atrocious military licence ’ had not filled the most inoffensive districts with hideous floggings, torturings, arsons, and rape.

Writers and speakers in England who have referred, usually under the influence of serious misconceptions, to the rise of the Home Rule party, have not realised also the most important fact, that at the foundation of the Home Rule movement there were alive in Ireland hundreds of thousands of men and women who had heard from the very lips of eye-witnesses the red story of 1798. There were alive in Ireland hundreds of men and women who had themselves been eye-witnesses of horrors in the terrible time. I talked with an old monk, still vigorous and keen, who, as a boy, had been forced, along with other children and with women and men expecting death and torture themselves, to attend the flogging and murder of a number of alleged ‘ rebels ’ by a drumhead court-martial in the County Kildare. It was not even a drumhead court-martial. ‘ It was just a couple of score of redcoats who strung up, and flogged, and hanged, just as many suspects, croppies they called them, as ever they liked, without trial or witness.’ The old monk had seen the flesh torn from the backs and sides spouting blood under the lashes, had seen the flogged

men hanged without further sentence or examination, had seen the assassins strike women and men, compelled to be present, with the blood-dripping whips which had mangled the dying and the dead. There were men in Dublin County in 1873 who remembered the floggings in the Beresford Riding School, where the backs of the croppies were 'nicely pickled,' just as a little preliminary to be 'followed up,' as Mr. Pitt wrote, 'by immediate steps for a Union.' Even twenty years later, when Mr. Gladstone, having at length studied the matter, burst out with his passionate denunciation of the 'blackguardism' of the methods employed to pass the Act of Union, the impression left by that horrible time was still so fresh and intimate, that there was a sense of personal satisfaction and justification throughout Ireland at the magnificent indignation of the Liberal Premier. Mr. Gladstone's policy in Ireland may have been wise or unwise, but human nature itself cried out with exultation at his castigation of the bygone devilry which had produced such lasting wrong. The injured ghosts of the men of 1798 stood along with the living comrades of the Fenian Brotherhood around the platform from which Isaac Butt and his colleagues proclaimed the repudiation of the Act of Union and the rise of a new programme of National Right and Imperial Expediency.

So much for the resentment at the black deeds which ended the eighteenth and opened the nineteenth centuries in Ireland. But there was still the question of the working of the Act of Union; and the Home Rule Conference Hall was full of representatives of Irish interests which had suffered and were to suffer more.

I begin with the wrongs to Irish Conservative influence, religion, and property. This is an aspect of the matter with which the popular party naturally, though erroneously, consider themselves to be unconnected, and which the usual advocates of what is called Conservatism ignore, apparently because they do not choose to understand. As I have remarked on desultory occasion already, Pitt's strange contribution to Imperial defence hit the Imperial party

in Ireland hardest of all. At the present day, indeed, Pitt may be accurately said to have wiped it out. Its control of native legislation is gone with the suppression of the native legislature. The leadership of the agricultural community is gone. The Established Church is gone. The settlement of landed estate is gone. The grand juries are gone. The magistracies are hardly worth having. The hunting and sporting are gone except under sufferance. The estates are almost gone. The mansions and demesnes are threatened. The English garrison has been driven into the sea by Unionist legislation. Where are the proud Lords of Parliament? Where are the mighty landowners who rode to hustings and polling-booth at the head of armies of tenantry? Whatever has become of the Irish masses—in their graves the half of them, or beyond the Atlantic—there is neither present nor future for the Conservative classes whom Pitt blessed with the Act of Union.

I suppose it would be impossible to find three men more profoundly imbued with the spirit of Irish Conservatism as it existed in the patriot ranks of Grattan and Charlemont than Isaac Butt, the leader of the new movement, Rev. Professor Galbraith, the Trinity Fellow, and Captain King Harman, the representative of one of the greatest and proudest families of the ancient Protestant ascendancy. Practically the same as they in all essentials of position and principles were the Hon. Charles Ffrench, Mr. O'Conor Don, Mr. Bryan, 'the squire of Jenkinstown,' and Mr. Mitchell Henry, the Manchester magnate who had identified himself with Ireland and built Kylemore Castle, that modern palace, in one of the beauty spots of his adopted country. Their attitude and their speeches showed how thoroughly they had learned the lesson of ruin which lay in all the working of the Act of Union during the three-quarters of a century of its operation. I can still hear the shout of welcome which went up from the great meeting as Isaac Butt, his frank engaging face beaming with pleasure, introduced Captain King Harman, the typical landlord of the best aristocracy, tall and fair like a handsome Viking.

King Harman at once accentuated the Imperial and national significance and importance of the Home Rule settlement. 'We are come here,' he cried, 'to say that Home Rule is a matter of vital necessity, not only for this country, but for Great Britain. Let us stand together, and I defy the world.' Mr. Mitchell Henry, himself a Protestant, drove home the moral of the recent disestablishment of the Protestant Church of Ireland, whose perpetual maintenance had been an essential and fundamental condition of the Union. 'The Protestants of Ireland,' he reminded them, 'had found to their cost that when the interest of the English Government is at stake, their interests are made a plaything and a bauble in the battle of party. It was a principle of the Act of Union that the Protestant Church should never be disestablished. By the disestablishment of the Protestant Church the Act of Union has been broken by English statesmen with as little concern as if it had been a Turnpike Bill or a Railway Bill.' Greater injury than any Church disestablishment was still to be done to the remaining interests of the Irish Conservative class. Protestants who had not come to the Home Rule Conference were suspecting it. Seven years previously, while I was still a university student, the old Lord Clancarty, an austere evangelical of evangelicals, had said to me, 'You will hardly be a grown man before English politicians will have thrown us Protestants overboard like useless lumber which has served their turn.'

The working of the Act of Union had, indeed, spared the interests of no section or class of the Irish community, with the exception of one category, and that a narrow and restricted one, of auxiliaries, useful, or believed to be useful, to the English interest. Popular rights had gone the way of olden privilege. Agriculture, trade, education, public subsistence, private estate, had all been neglected, or had been violently and cynically swept away.

I have elsewhere referred to some destructive consequences, economically considered, of the vast measure of popular disfranchisement which accompanied the fraudulent

hypocrisy called Catholic Emancipation. Forty or fifty place-hunters and hacks-for-sale belonging to the Pope's religion had been empowered to go to the London Parliament to push their personal concerns and quest for jobs, but more than 150,000 actual electors, called within the constitution by the Irish Parliament, had been driven out of the franchise altogether. That was Emancipation! When O'Connell was cajoling the voters of Clare in 1829 with mouthing promises which meant nothing, he had already consented to the virtual outlawry of seven-eighths of the national electorate. It was at the same time the most terrible blow to the relations of landlord and tenant, and especially to the security of the small tenant and to his worth as a man and a citizen. The forty-shilling freeholders had carried the Clare election. They could carry nearly all the elections in Ireland. They were a power in the land and an object of special value upon every estate in the country. United to their landlords, they could make their landlords the masters of any situation; and on this account they had weight and importance in the eyes of all wise owners of estates. By a stroke of the pen the Union Parliament had reduced all these privileged citizens to mere helots, voteless, voiceless human cattle, incapable of aiding their landlord's welfare or safeguarding their own.

It is not too much to say that but for the universal disfranchisement of the forty-shilling freeholders in 1829, the evictions in mass which were to make Ireland a desert could never have taken place.¹ As we know, the British middle class which was put in supreme power by the narrowing and disastrous policy of the Reform Act of 1832 was already ripening for the abolition of agricultural protection, and the Irish agricultural estates, in the hour of their

¹ 'At the time of Emancipation the small farmers, by the abolition of their franchise, were left more absolutely at the mercy of the landlords. . . . The Clearing System began in 1829.'—Mitchell's *Ireland*, vol. ii, p. 198.

The Emancipation of 1829 left the small farmers, by the abolition of their franchise, at the mercy of the evictors! This inscription has been omitted from O'Connell's monument.

deadliest need, had been deprived of the votes of the whole of the lesser tenantry, while the larger tenants marched behind O'Connell and their priests to aid the English manufacturers and the Manchester economists to flood the tillage of Ireland with foreign corn. The provision of cheap food for cheap factory labour was, indeed, a natural ambition in the English owners of factories, but, though the rapid extension of foreign demand for English goods disguised for a couple of generations in England—till the foreigner manufactured also—the consequences of depressing the national area of tillage, there was never a moment's disguise in Ireland. The value of land collapsed, and the value of the poor tiller simply ceased to exist. Better, indeed, in such circumstances grazing herds of prospective beef and mutton for the English market than disfranchised helots unable even to defend by a vote the rights of agriculture. Although O'Connell and the priests assisted the attack on native tillage, still the attack came directly from the Union Parliament, was approved by the Union Parliament, and has never been compensated by the Union Parliament. If the Irish landlords, who were almost to a man against the headlong abolition of native corn protection, still had at their back in 1846 the seven-eighths of Ireland disfranchised at 'Emancipation,' it is quite certain that moderating modifications at least would have succeeded in the London legislature.

I know that the Clare election will be brandished in my face to disprove my assertion that as a rule the forty-shilling freeholders would have voted with the landlords and the land. But I have not made the assertion rashly nor without examination. The forty-shilling freeholders to-day have disappeared without a trace, except perhaps among the paupers under congestion; but when the Home Rule movement arose in the 'seventies, the experience of many witnesses could be invoked. The Clare election really gives no clue whatever to the normal relations of the small tenantry and their landlords. The Clare election was represented to the tenantry as a part of their beloved

religion. The return of Counsellor O'Connell was made almost a dogma of the Faith, or altogether a dogma of the Faith. No doubt that the clergy recognised the infinite importance to them of having in the British Parliament a body of Irish representatives such as the Irish representatives have usually been since 1829. We may recognise fully the overwhelming strength of the motives which made the fields round the county town of Clare at O'Connell's candidature resemble the fields round the Council of Clermont when Pope and friar preached the first crusade. Does the reader really know what the Clare election of 1829 was in reality? One hundred and fifty priests, very many of them clergymen of saintly lives, watched all the avenues to the polling. The peasantry were adjured to give their votes to O'Connell 'for God and the country.' The voters of his opponent were denounced by priestly lips as 'renegades to God.' It was the era of open voting, and if an elector was observed going to vote against O'Connell, a priest rushed to intercept, and making the sign of the Cross with his consecrated hand upon the peasant's forehead, turned him back from his purpose. A forty-shilling freeholder who had voted for O'Connell's rival was announced to the crowd by a priest as having dropped instantly dead, and the awed multitude were asked to go on their knees 'and beg God for mercy on his soul.' Considered as a free election, O'Connell's Clare return was a burlesque of freedom.¹ Considered as a tremendous and terrifying invocation and exhibition of supernatural pressure, it may be unique in history, but it was no act of free citizens. It was no choice between O'Connell and Vesey Fitzgerald. It was simply the choice between the clergy and hell-fire. And all this was done, all these tremendous agencies and terrors were invoked, in order to send to a Parliament outside of Ireland an eloquent lawyer who professed to regard that assembly as a foreign and invalid usurpation,

¹ For a moderate, admiring, and trustworthy account of this strange appeal to the people, the reader may consult the able and learned *Life of O'Connell*, by Mr. M. MacDonagh. (Cassell & Co. 1903.)

but who was prepared at once to make use of it to disfranchise seven-eighths of his devout electors themselves, to endow his family and supporters with Government salaries and places, and, later on, to abolish the legal protection of Irish agriculture and to let loose on the primitive industry of Ireland the unchecked competition of all the favoured climates of the world. It was a curious triumph of religious enthusiasm; but the power which set that enthusiasm in motion already understood the utility, in the party struggles in the London Parliament, of having forty, sixty, or eighty obedient votes to cast into the balance of party ambitions.

I must not be understood as impugning either the motive or the right of the clergy to take such steps as I have described towards an end which the clergy are bound to keep in view. What to them is temporal welfare or national existence? They have a mission which superascends all such considerations, and that mission may impose upon them peculiar anxieties, and peculiar energy, in face of the political system which is known as party government, and which is held commonly to be the palladium, and more than the palladium, of the British Constitution. I may recall at once that Britain's pride in party government is by no means as yet a universal sentiment of mankind. I am convinced that the suave and wary ecclesiastics who lead chief secretaries for Ireland admire the system of party government, as they admire most things, moderately. Later in this narrative I shall have to notice how the very essence of Mr. Parnell's method of operations consisted in a withering contempt for British party government. At all events, the Catholic Churchmen in Ireland have recognised, from the middle of the eighteenth century at least, that just as an absolute monarchy requires one sort of handling, so the system of party government requires another; and the possession and disposal of votes is an indispensable element of that other. What a thoroughly reliable father-director or a thoroughly reliable reigning favourite may be at the ear of a despotic king, that, and

even more, a thoroughly reliable body of votes may be in the shifting balance of the ins who fear to be outs and the outs who want to be ins. Père La Chaise, Madame de Maintenon ; O'Connell's tail, Mr. John Redmond's appendix ; the revocation of the Edict of Nantes, the transfer of an Irish University, might be impossible without such auxiliaries. If an ecclesiastical authority become convinced that a certain governing party—the supposition is not altogether imaginary—will ruin all the Catholic schools in the country, or will double their public subsidies, according as the arrangement spells majority or minority, I fail to see why that ecclesiastical authority should fail to employ the regular means which can enlighten the conscience of party government.

' There was a market for votes at Westminster just as there was a market for fat cattle at Smithfield.' Bishops can study the records of Parliament as well as the Whig historian. The proprietorship of rotten boroughs did not end with Old Sarum. There may have been only transmigration of souls. I understand the clerical perplexity in presence of supreme responsibilities and parliamentary traditions. I respect it. I defend its consequences. I only deplore the evil fortune which has driven sacred interests to seek the shelter of public degradation. It was the unbroken continuance of political corruption, of public jobbery, of the continuous market for votes at the Castle of Dublin, though the ' valuable consideration ' was rendered in a Parliament at Westminster Bridge instead of College Green ; it was this curious result of ' Pitt's campaign against Irish corruption ' which was strengthening the Irish demand for the restoration of our national legislature. Emancipation had turned out to be disfranchisement. The British defence of Irish Conservative interests was fairly certain to end in destroying them altogether. But it was the deuce and all to know that all that fine English zeal for the abolition of ' the nest of place-hunters which was the Irish Parliament ' was translated into the hard fact that the working of the Act of Union was an unbroken chapter of

jobbery and place-hunting. The patronage of all places under the Crown in Ireland formed regularly part of the conditions of alliance under which O'Connell supported the Ministries of Lord Melbourne and Lord John Russell. The Liberator's son, Morgan O'Connell, got a salary of £600 a year, rising to £1200. One son-in-law became clerk to the Hanaper; another son-in-law, resident magistrate. Another O'Connellite son was made a deputy-lieutenant; a cousin also got a salaried magistracy. When the snug post of Master in Chancery fell vacant, and was already destined for another applicant, Mr. Liberator and Repealer and Emancipator O'Connell went in person to the Castle to insist upon its being granted, as it was granted, to a Mr. Murphy, who was brother of the wife of a Mr. Liberator O'Connell, junior. But the list of O'Connell clansmen and kinsmen who got quartered upon the public finances by the alien Government is too long for quotation. It was the same story at all stages of the O'Connellite tail. To take an example from the family of one O'Connellite follower in Parliament, without mentioning the name, as the family is still a respectable county name in Ireland—a son was started in diplomacy as attaché, a brother got an assistant-barristership, a cousin was made stipendiary magistrate, another cousin was made stipendiary magistrate, a third cousin got a poor-law commissionership. The Treasury had as many O'Connellites sucking at its dugs as there were Beresfords and Corrys before the Union. In 1873 the members of the Home Rule Conference could jostle on every Dublin sidewalk O'Connellite placemen who had been patriots. When a patriot called himself an Independent, that meant that he expected extra remuneration for his independence. One patriot had pushed his independence so far as to bid a discontented tenantry remember what they could do to their landlord 'when the nights got long and dark.' Within twelve months merit so luminous was recognised with the post of Solicitor-General. Two of his partners in independent patriotism received respectively a junior lordship of the Treasury

and a chief commissionership of income-tax. The Churchmen, true to their settled policy of never falling out with a Government which did not fall out with them, accepted and supported the renegades whom the Cabinet had delighted to honour ; and the Young Ireland historian, Gavan Duffy, sadly complains that the worst of the New Ministerialists were able to present themselves to their constituents 'like Richard III, leaning on two bishops.' Perhaps the venerable pastors held that their action was covered by the precept to make friends of the mammon of iniquity. Every bishop, it was said, was entitled to ten Government appointments ; every parish priest, to two. That was 'the rule' Catholic Emancipation. I must admit that the Government could not have gone to a better quarter for advisers.

Englishmen are kept by their newspapers, occupied with loftier themes, in such perfect ignorance of the island beyond the Irish Sea which England condescends to govern and do for, I am entirely confident that not one English politician in ten thousand has an idea that repeal and emancipation were large and convenient screens for the most wholesale system of bribery and corruption by the British Government in Ireland. Yet there was nothing which more profoundly moved and impelled both the founders of the Home Rule movement and even the organisers of extreme nationalist conspiracy. If tyranny were only honest, but the despotism of the bought and the buyers !

I remember standing one day in those Home Rule days outside the General Post Office in Dublin, talking with four very remarkable men—Sir John Gray, proprietor of the neighbouring *Freeman's Journal* ; Mr. John Martin, a venerated leader of the Young Ireland protest against O'Connellism and foreign rule a generation before ; Mr. McCarthy Downing, M.P. for the County Cork ; and Dr. Robert MacDonnell, one of the most distinguished of Dublin physicians, and a man of wide and graceful culture. He was very partial to me, whom he used to call his 'young friend from Babylon,' in reference to my London residence. 'You will meet everybody in Dublin if you wait outside

the General Post Office long enough.' At any rate we had met ; and four men who knew more thoroughly the history, personal, corporate, private, public, and anecdotal, of contemporary Ireland and the Irish could not well be found than my four companions. I remember that I was answering a lot of questions by Mr. Martin upon London and the London Irish, when I heard Sir John whisper to McCarthy Downing : ' It's the whole backstairs list that's posting letters to-day.' And it was curious, as they proceeded to explain to me, while adding pungent commentaries understood of one another. I believe that in the course of a quarter of an hour there passed us half a score of gentlemen, every one of whom had been a purchased patriot, and nearly every one of whom was the centre of a story of brazenly amusing corruption, the details of which flowed with irresistible comicality from the omniscient memories of Sir John Gray and Mr. McCarthy Downing, while Dr. MacDonnell and Mr. John Martin stood sadly smiling. The veteran Young Irelander turned to me, after I had listened with astonishment to the stories, and said : ' When you are reading about us, that will help you to know why we had to quit Conciliation Hall,' referring to the final breach with the O'Connellites under the dictatorial Liberator's incompetent and arrogant son, John O'Connell, the lieutenant and wirepuller of the decadent autocrat of blarney. Mr. John Martin, universally known in Ireland as ' Honest John Martin,' was a Protestant Nationalist, and had been honoured by O'Connell himself with exclusion from the Repeal Association for his moderate and just protest against some of its misdeeds. I had the honour of being one of Mr. Martin's colleagues in Parliament. He often related how at the same time that O'Connell, in pursuit of his duty as patronage dispenser for his Majesty's Government, was excluding ' Honest John Martin,' another Protestant Nationalist, Mr. Robert Orr, a gentleman of large landed estate, had openly written to the Repeal Association, which ought rather to be called the Jobbery Association, to declare that, though still an ardent repealer, ' he could

not remain in an association which had become a normal school for place-hunters.' So much for the famous story that the Act of Union put down or was intended to put down Government corruption in Ireland. There were hundreds of men among the original members of the Home Rule Association, there were tens of thousands of their supporters throughout the country, whose youth had been passed in direct presence of, and immediate contact with, that corruption in its worst form, embodied in O'Connellism as patronage distributor of the British Government in Ireland. If the judicious reader will meditate a moment on these facts, it will help to make plainer why a Home Rule movement must have been long since latent in many minds before the stimulus of the Fenian insurrection had quickened its development.

But there is more to be told, if English opinion is seriously to understand how and why the Home Rule Parliamentary party rose to existence and popularity in Ireland, to activity and I can hardly say popularity at Westminster. Though I neither conceal nor minimise the force of my own convictions, I endeavour fairly to bring all the facts of the case before the students of these pages. There remains to be mentioned, accordingly, a crucial influence in the whole matter, the influence, namely, of the terrible failure of government by England in the catastrophe, the national and imperial catastrophe, of the Great Famine, and of the fatal blow which English policy or incapacity dealt to the whole of the Conservative forces of Ireland at that period, completely ending also the existence of the Irish territorial aristocracy as a factor of authority in the subsequent evolution or revolution of the country.

It must be realised that at the foundation of the Irish Parliamentary party by Mr. Butt the whole country was full of surviving witnesses of the Great Famine. The men and women were still alive in tens of thousands who had seen the first coming of the miserable yellow meal for the starving countrysides of Ireland, even while the great wains of golden corn were proceeding in long trains to the

export-ships in the Irish harbours. For this is the first, the fundamental, the unknown-to-nowaday-Englishmen fact, which is the great horror of the famine; that it was a famine in a land laden and bursting with the best of all human food; and that the Irish people perished by the hundred thousand, while food, food, food in thousands of golden tons went pouring out of the country. The potato had failed, which was the staple subsistence of the toiling people; but the vast acreage of corn had not failed, which was sold yearly in English and Continental markets for the profit of the landowner and the grain-merchant. Do I mean to say that, for example, while one half of Munster was black with rotting potato-fields, there was another half rich and smiling with the bread of man? and that the millions of men, women, and tender children in the black potato-wastes were allowed to sicken, and starve, and die for want of the bread that was across the road? That is just what I say and mean to say. The millions who starved in the blighted potato-wastes had no money, you see. The English and Continental grain-dealers had money for the fine Irish corn of the fields that were fertile and abounding. So the bread of man went out to the foreign buyers, and the millions of starving, hunger-tortured creatures hungered and died in the next field, in the potato-waste.¹ The Manchester School of Political Economy was strong, invincibly strong, on the freedom of trade under all circumstances, even when hundreds of thousands of little children were starving for bread. The British Government had abandoned the whole of what it had in the place of a soul to the Manchester School, and a foreign was not an Irish Government anyhow; and so the Irish corn went to the export market, and the Irish children, and the gaunt skeleton mothers, and the great strong men who had filled so many British armies on victorious fields, went to the famine graves.

¹ According to Thom's *Official Directory*, under the year 1845, there were exported to England alone from Ireland no less than 3,250,000 quarters of wheat, besides cattle, making a total value of £17,000,000.

That consummation was the triumph of the Manchester School, . . . and the triumph of not having your own government to defend your own nation. The men who were founding the new Parliamentary party understood all that.

Now let us see some of the details of how this massacre, by having no native government, came to be worked out. In the first place, as I have said, there was the Government's refusal to stop the export of corn and keep in the country the food immediately at hand. In this connexion, I am very nearly certain that it was Mr. Denny Lane of Cork, one of the most respected and cultivated of the survivors of Young Irelandism, who related to us one day the story how, in the horrible business of the refusal by the Union Parliament to keep the Irish food in Ireland, a strong and vehement support of the famishing nation came from Lord John Manners and other heads of the Young England party at that time. The tale filled me with a sentiment of almost passionate affection for the noble-minded Lord John Manners, whom I was soon to meet in Parliament, where, now a white-haired veteran, he was regarded rather as a relic of the Protectionist superstition than as a part of practical politics. The Manchester School had not played itself out in England in 1874. I accentuated towards him the courtesy which I always observed to the individual in my contests with English parties in the House and with the House itself. Again and again I allowed Lord John to know that there were some Irish Irreconcilables who had nothing but the kindest respect for him ; and he quickly understood what I intended. One night in a hot skirmish with the Conservative Ministry, Lord John said to me after a division and many divisions : ' You go too far, Mr. O'Donnell. You go much too far. But I remember that we treated Ireland like fools and brutes in the famine-time. You know that Lord George Bentinck and I, and some others, tried to keep the corn in Ireland when the Irish were starving, but the Free Traders wanted the hocus-pocus of supply and demand. Your

starving countrymen were demanding enough, God knows, and they ought to have been supplied. But you go too far now, Mr. O'Donnell, much too far. At any rate I am bound to say so.' And I knew that Lord John Manners would have gone as far and farther, had he been Irish. Long days afterwards, when I had been some twenty years out of Parliament and mostly abroad, I saw an announcement of a Tariff Reform meeting in Victoria Street, 'the Duke of Rutland in the chair,' where Mr. Balfour was to speak. I was in time for the meeting, and again saw Lord John, now Duke of Rutland; and putting myself in his way, as he came out, supported or linked by a couple of gentlemen, the courteous old veteran recognised me at once, and spoke some kindly words, and I had the opportunity to repeat the ancient tale of my respect and esteem. The gallant Young Englander was a gallant Old Englander now, with his old-fashioned stateliness and his chivalric courtesy that came from a noble heart. A few months later he was dead, and I knelt and prayed for the eternal repose of a great soul.

Vividly as the members of the Conference remembered in many cases, and resented in every case, the drain of corn from Ireland in the terrible years when the potato blight had destroyed the normal sustenance of the peasantry, there was a still deeper and fiercer sentiment, if possible, at another incomprehensible atrocity of the London legislation on the famine. This was the unprecedented, the unparalleled, the astounding provision of the Relief Acts that 'no applicant should be entitled to relief who possessed more than a quarter of an acre of land.'¹ The famous and infamous 'Quarter Acre Clause' was spoken and muttered from man to man as the unsurpassable proof of the incompetence of London legislators in Irish affairs, or the

¹ 'In the new Act of the Out-door Relief there was one significant clause. It was that should any farmer who held land be forced to apply for aid under this Act for himself and his family, he should not have it until he had first given up all his land to the landlord—except one quarter of an acre. It was called the Quarter Acre Clause; and was found the most efficient and the cheapest of all the Ejectment Acts.'—*Mitchell's Ireland*, vol. i, p. 218.

deadly hostility of England to the welfare of Ireland. If contemporary Englishmen wish to gauge the origins of Home Rule, they must devote particular attention to this notorious and inexplicable enactment. I was witness of many a passionate discussion in which the quarter-acre clause was denounced as a thing of murderous import and effect. There was a representative from North Galway, who enjoyed profound regard in his district from the memory of what he had done in the Black Famine-time. Not only had he exhausted his substance in the attempt to feed the perishing myriads, but he had gone out, month after month, with a body of labourers, seeking out and burying the festering corpses of the countless men and women and children who had died of hunger and the hunger typhus. 'It was the quarter-acre clause,' he cried with clenched hand raised aloft, 'it was the quarter-acre clause—perdition to the black hearts that planned it!—which destroyed the nation. With these hands I buried more than a thousand dead. I found them everywhere—in the ditch, on the open road, behind the walls, at the doors of the homes they had to quit. They dropped dead going to the road-making or coming from the road-making. They lay down in the field empty, and they never got up. Hundreds of them were comfortable men, strong farmers, before they had to give up their farms in order to get some yellow meal for the wife and children. If they had been helped on their farms to plant something else till the blight left the potato, not one in ten, not one in a hundred, would have died.' The famine was bad enough, but the quarter-acre clause evicted the whole countryside, and made recovery impossible—just impossible and hopeless.

I believe that the eminent legislators of the Manchester School who decreed that an agricultural nation must permanently abandon the means of agriculture and the sole means of livelihood before there could be any Government help to tide over a passing crisis were purely actuated by pure precaution; I believe that the Upper and Lower Houses of the Union Parliament in 1846 gave this specimen

of their profound forethought in order to check the felonious designs of any individual Irishman who might sham starvation in order to indulge in the luxury of yellow meal porridge at the public expense ! A whole nation was dying by the ten thousand, by the hundred thousand, and the London Parliament decreed that no Irish family should receive food who possessed more than a quarter-acre of land !!! But there were scores of thousands of Irish families with ten, twenty acres of land, who now had no more crop, and no more food, than the quarter-acre man or the roadside beggar without a cubic foot of any soil whatever. There were at least one million families of Irish tillers who under ordinary circumstances were well able to support themselves upon their holdings. For the season their crops had failed them, and they were starving. Clearly the instant necessity was to feed them on their temporarily fruitless holdings, to help them to resow their acres with better seed, and in another year to expect the end of the famine and the salvation of the nation. Clearly the first and indispensable step to be taken in any failure of crops in an agricultural population is to help to keep the tillers in life and work upon their holdings until the temporary crisis has been passed. Ask the least experienced of British administrators in India, that land of agricultural famines, and he will know at least that the best of all relief work is the work to make the farm fruitful next year, while keeping the farmer in life during the season of ruin. But the British Parliament in the Black Famine of Ireland decreed that the entire population must quit their holdings, must become homeless and houseless paupers, under pain of stern and strict denial of a morsel of relief for man, and wife, and child. ' I have a farm of twenty acres, sir, and a good house upon it, and my tables and chairs, and beds, and all my farming things. For God's sake, sir, help me to live on it, and to till it against the next harvest. Do not turn us out on the cold road for being only unfortunate by the visitation of God.' So pleaded hundreds of thousands of Irish agricultural men in 1845 and 1846 to the representatives of British

Government—the Government which had taken the place of the Irish Legislature; and the reply of English law was invariably and inexorably: ‘You must quit your holding, you must go on the road with wife and child; or not even a handful of India meal for your hunger and the hunger of your little ones. You shall not be helped to till your farms. Go work upon our relief roads, which are not wanted, which lead nowhere, but which are our English economic test that you Irish are really destitute and not shamming.’ On March 6, 1847, there were 730,000 Irish heads of families on the Government relief works, representing at least five times as many human beings, and 730,000 Irish farms had been for ever put out of the way of ever being of use to the perishing people. To quote a couple of contemporary Conservative witnesses on the result.

‘A gentleman travelling from Borris-in-Ossory to Kilkenny,’ wrote the *Dublin Evening Mail*, ‘counts at both sides of the road, in a distance of twenty-four miles, *nine men and four ploughs* occupied in the fields; but sees multitudes of wan labourers, *beyond the power of computation by a mail-car passenger*, labouring to destroy the road he was travelling on. It was a public relief work.’ In the same month of March, the *Mayo Constitution* wrote: ‘The whole land is one vast waste: a soul is not to be seen working on the holdings of the poor farmers throughout the country.’¹

The Home Rule Conference of 1873 was filled with grey-haired men who had lived through those scenes. If the reader does not ask himself, as these men had asked themselves, What is the intelligence or utility of British Government in Ireland? then he will never understand the growth and persistence of the Home Rule movement.

¹ Of course the writers of the *Nation*—the great organ of insurrection and vengeance—had no difficulty about explaining the motives of that astounding maladministration. ‘The quarter-acre clause was the cheapest and most efficient of all the Ejectment Acts. Most of the people had now neither house nor home. To attempt to till even a rood of ground meant exclusion from relief, was a sentence of death. The foreign Government was working out its calculation, and the anticipated product was *two millions of Irish corpses*.’ What can have been the calculation which evicted a whole nation?

In his stately and classic style Lord Brougham deplored the horrors of the Irish Famine as 'surpassing anything in the pages of Thucydides, on the canvas of Poussin, in the dismal chant of Dante.' In the same year, the very same year, his Grace the Archbishop of Canterbury appointed a solemn day of thanksgiving for the abundant harvest and prosperity in England! It was truly a United Kingdom!

The Home Rule Conservatives among us, the King Harmans, the Colthursts, the O'Connor Dons, remembered with pride and anger that in that awful crisis the Irish Conservative class had put on record their protest along with the rest of their countrymen, and had been despised and rejected by British officialism equally with the landless wretches from the million of farms emptied by the quarter-acre clause. In the same hall which was now harbouring our Conference, the representatives of the landed gentry of Ireland had assembled only twenty-six years before, on January 14, in the Black '47—so short a period of time separated us from that tragedy—and had taken their place in defence of their perishing countrymen. It is only a very small part, though an important and significant part, of the general ignorance of their own history prevalent among Irishmen, that this great meeting of the Irish landowners has entirely slipped the popular memory. Even though O'Connell himself bore testimony to the faithful discharge of their duties by the Irish landlords in that awful time, going so far as to say that 'as a general rule no one can find fault with the Irish landlords since the awful calamity came upon us,' the base interests enlisted against common justice to the old proprietorial class have stopped the public ear to the voice of every witness. But it was a magnificent and memorable assemblage, however much it has been forgotten or ignored. Eighteen Irish peers and seven hundred landowners and magistrates were united with thirty-seven members of Parliament representing all political parties in Ireland. The chair was taken by the Marquis of Ormonde. The first resolution was moved by a Hamilton and seconded by O'Connell. Another resolution was

seconded by Smith O'Brien, whom indignant despair at his country's ruin was to make a hunted rebel the following year. So generous was the determination of the meeting to include the whole of Ireland within the scope of its sympathies ! The motions passed by the assembly constituted a great manifesto of national policy, as outspoken and patriotic as could be heard in the ranks of avowed nationalism. Its principal provisions comprehended the following points :—

1. The formation of an Irish party to represent the whole country on the policy required for the famine.
2. The suspension of all laws impeding the advent of food and the employment of all means, regardless of cost, required to save the people.
3. The use of the Royal Navy to carry food so as to save the costs of transport which, inflated by private speculation, enormously increased the price of food.¹
4. Productive works of relief to be a charge on landed property, but not unproductive works—such as the useless road-making imposed as a labour test without practical utility.
- 5 and 6. This assembly of nobles and squires also recommended, as a permanent encouragement to better tillage, that tenants should receive compensation for improvements ; and, as an encouragement to a residential proprietary, that absentee landlords should pay an absentee tax.

It was the general conviction of the Home Rule Conference of 1873 that the Irish gentry, if unseduced by foreign influences, would certainly have shown themselves true sons of Ireland. At the time the Landowners' Convention of 1847 was hailed with enthusiasm by Irish malcontents and Irish Conservatives alike. Mr. John Mitchell, the ultra-rebel of Young Ireland, bluntly affirmed the conviction of his

¹ Astounding to relate, the British Government refused the use of the Navy precisely on the ground that it would interfere with the profits of English shippers. In the words of Lord John Russell: 'It would be a great discouragement to individual shipowners.' So the food of the starving Irish was enhanced to put 50 per cent. into the pockets of the British carrying trade !

comrades 'that they do not consider the ruin of the landed gentry to be the best remedy, or any remedy at all, for Irish evils.' The ablest writer in the Irish Conservative camp, Dr. Maunsell of the *Dublin Mail*, wrote with emotion of his pleasure in assisting

at the most important demonstration, and what, if not marred, will be the most important transaction that has occurred in Ireland for half a century. In the Rotunda—in the very room consecrated by the meetings of the Volunteers of 1782—there were yesterday assembled eighteen peers and 700 of the magistracy and gentry of every county in the kingdom, who solemnly and unanimously pledged themselves to abandon party strife, and to work together for the good of their common country.

But there was not to be a chance for the good of the common country. We were not in Ireland of the Volunteers, but under England of the Act of Union. The patriotic programme of the Irish landowners was tossed into the waste-paper basket by the British Parliament quite as contemptuously as any resolutions of Old Irelanders and Young Irelanders. Every adequate measure of relief was rejected. 'Eviction before relief' made the quarter-acre clause an iron besom to sweep the nation out of its homes on to the roadsides. As landlords' men and tenants' men grasped hands together in the Conference of 1873, we cursed the foreign fools and tyrants who had dug the famine graves of 1846 and 1847 and 1848.

The Old Irish landlords were soon to follow the Old Irish tenantry. The Act of Union had a besom to sweep the Irish landowners also on to the roadsides. The Encumbered Estates Act was to be the quarter-acre clause of the Irish gentry.

Within seven years this heaviest blow in England's power fell upon the English garrison. While still enfeebled by the losses of the famine, while still indebted for the enormous poor-rates which had risen as the country sank in pauperism, bearing the additional burden in numerous cases of family debts due to the higher cost of living since

London was substituted for Dublin as the centre of an Irish country gentleman's ambition, the Irish gentry were ordered by the London Parliament to extend their neck for the sweep of the Encumbered Estates Act. The London money-lending banks and companies were empowered to sell up their Irish debtors in a fallen market, which, if it promised fine scope for investments, ensured ruin to the seller forced by the Act to sell at any price. Some three thousand Irish estates departed from their old owners. Thrifty Scotsmen and Manchester men were encouraged to buy the innumerable bargains of Irish estates which must be sold for any song which was forthcoming. Hundreds of the most popular of the old families were swept out of their old homes. Hundreds of the most infernal sharks who had accumulated in honest or dishonest industry the comparatively few pounds sufficient to buy an Irish title-deed, rushed to become Irish landlords with an eye to enhanced rents; and the era of evictions for profit came to complete the deadly work of the evictions for famine and the quarter-acre clause. England drove the Old Irish gentry into the sea, and now the Manchester men's ejectments were to finish in the Irish valleys and on the Irish hillsides the clearances of the quarter-acre clause. The lesson of London rule had hardly another moral left to teach; but the Home Rule Conference was entitled at least to draw the moral for the remaining gentry that British ingratitude was the only reward which was certain to follow service for generations to the British connexion. Captain King Harman and his fellows at the Conference thought that the cup was full to overflowing. Before they were ten years older, they were to learn from the Gladstone Rent Courts that Irish land had not yet found the bottom of British land legislation. Captain King Harman had still £8000 a year when I saw him in the Rotunda in 1873. By 1883 a worse than Encumbered Estates Act had relieved him of his £8000 a year, but had left £32,000 a year in the unreduced and undiminished enjoyment of the London encumbrancers of the King Harman estate. The Act of Union has chivied

finely the Irish gentry out of Ireland, while the statistics of cattle-drives and emigration sailings hardly yet appear to indicate that the ruin of the King Harman and a thousand successors has finally rooted the Act of Union in a prosperous and contented Ireland. But really I cannot extend my chapters on the foundation of the Home Rule movement to the volumes demanded by the perplexities of Mr. Augustine Birrell and the denunciations of Mr. John Redmond.

Two other features of the famine tragedy and its presentation on the London political stage continued to be fiercely potent in 1873, while Mr. Butt stood recalling the memories which should teach Irishmen to unite in patriotism for native rule. The first of these potent influences was the still keen anger at the *curiosa infelicitas* with which the English press—the *Times* being easily first in the business—had treated the agonies of Ireland. I only quote some of the excerpts from the leading journals which hurtled and seared in most conversations and discussions of the time, leaving not infrequently inflamed and angry scars in the hearts of speakers and listeners. There never will be statistician to calculate the full injury which the *Times* has done to—shall we call it the popularity of the British Empire?

Of course, I make no pretence of exhausting the wealth of quotations which were fiercely cited to corroborate the thesis that England was the deadly enemy of Ireland, exaggerating all her shortcomings and gloating over her ruin, even when shortcomings and ruin were the notorious results of London interference and incapacity or malevolence. A few specimens are all I can afford the time to cull. There were the joyous, or apparently joyous, reflexions over the wild emigration of the dishoused and famishing multitudes: 'The Celts are going with a vengeance,' and its twin prediction, 'An Irishman will soon be as rare on the banks of the Shannon as a Red Indian on the banks of the Hudson'; an implied identification of the values of the savages in process of extirpation before higher races. Another burst

of this congratulatory humour recalled the agrarian crimes of violence among the rural population who had been deprived of all constitutional protection by the abolition of the small-holding franchise and were being swept wholesale into the roadside by the operation of the quarter-acre clause supervening on the Free Trade transformation of the corn-lands. 'They are departing,' shouted the exulting English journalist. 'The flying demons of assassination and murder are departing the land!' To the Irish advocates who blamed the ineffable ineptitude of the Union Parliament for a part at least of the evils and abominations, the ineffable authority gave back the genial retort: 'Though the Union were gall, it shall be maintained.' There should surely be room in some Imperial Glyptotheca of events, which the Empire would not willingly abandon to oblivion, for the representation of the great London editor, in the character of the Good Samaritan, pouring vinegar and gall into the wounds of Ireland left bleeding by the wayside after falling among thieves.

I think it was at a party given by Lady Gray, wife of Sir John Gray the proprietor of the *Freeman's Journal*, that I first received ocular and audible evidence of the continued influence of the other feature of England's policy in the famine-time. There were a considerable number of members of the Conference present after dinner, and Mr. Butt was in splendid humour at the success of the meetings, and was firing off an inexhaustible volume of good stories from his richly stored recollection of the whole recent history of Ireland from O'Connellism in its zenith down to the present day. He had debated against repeal with O'Connell. He had been counsel for the defence of the Young Ireland prisoners, and twenty years later he had just been counsel for the defence of the Fenian prisoners. As Professor of Political Economy of the University of Dublin he had examined and condemned the legislative and administrative crudities from London which had turned the potato failure into the famine catastrophe. His stock of information was vast, and he now drew upon it for a

reminiscence which immediately riveted the attention of the Catholic clergymen present. 'Perhaps Dean MacManus has forgotten how Lord Palmerston thanked the clergy for putting down the Young Ireland insurrection?' The question was addressed jestingly to one of the most influential priests in the west of Ireland; but there was no jest about the Dean's response. Indeed, several other clergymen hastened to add their comment, and a great part of the evening was devoted to the new topic. The strongest resentment was expressed as the story was told over again. The clergy had not only opposed, almost unanimously, the actual attempt of the Young Irelanders to excite a disarmed and hunger-weakened people to attack a garrison of 50,000 British soldiers, but had mainly contributed to inculcate the wonderful patience with which millions of the people had starved and perished with hardly a protest. To their horror they had found that a Cabinet minister, Lord Palmerston himself, had been blackening them all the time to the papal authorities¹ as the accomplices and ring-leaders in murder and outrage, and as brutally intimating to the Pope that the summary hanging of a good many of his Holiness's clerical children in Ireland would be eminently desirable in the interest of peace and order in that country. It was an impressive scene, and to me an extraordinary disclosure, which helped to explain a good deal of the support which Home Rule was afterwards to obtain from numbers of priests, even in spite of the chilling attitude of their bishops. 'Served us thoroughly right,' cried the outspoken Father Lavelle. 'We ought all to have put ourselves at the head of our flocks and led them to death or victory, as the

¹ In his *Four Years of Irish History*, p. 330, the Right Hon. Sir Charles Gavan Duffy gives the following extract from a dispatch by Lord Palmerston to Lord Minto at Rome, in December 1847: 'You may confidently assure the papal authorities that at present in Ireland, misconduct is the rule, and good conduct the exception, in the Catholic priests. . . . Scarcely anybody now talks of these Irish murders without uttering a fervent wish that a dozen priests might be hung forthwith; and the most effectual remedy which has been suggested, and which seems the most popular, is that whenever a man is murdered in Ireland, the priest of the parish should be transported, or—a more popular proposal—that he should be hung.'

Bishop of Derry wanted to do.' Then cropped up another story. Bishop Maginn of Derry had sent word to Smith O'Brien in 1848 to promise him that 'if he would only wait till the corn was stacked,' the bishop and twenty of his priests would march in person to head the insurrection. I listened with the most intense interest. I was getting a glimpse into the effect of the famine atrocity, that awful waste of human lives by foreign incapacity, which outpassed all my ideas upon the resentment in Ireland.

Speaking from the politico-military standpoint alone, I had already satisfied myself that the sole reasons why the Young Ireland insurgents had not flung the British Government into the sea in a week, were in the first place their putting off the rising from 1846 or the early days of 1847 until 1848, when a million had already starved to death and the rest were enfeebled with hunger and disease, and in the second place their talking about nationality when the cry, as the need, was to seize the corn, to stop all tax-paying, and to defy the Home Office and the Horse Guards together to face two millions of frenzied men, fighting for the lives of their helpless ones, and preferring to die by the thousand in battle than by the hundred thousand in the charnel-houses of the quarter-acre clause. England was full of Chartists. France was bitterly hostile to England in the last years of Louis Philippe. America was watching with passionate pity the misery of Ireland. If one man of courage and will had given the order in the autumn of 1846 or the spring of 1847: 'Seize the corn! Save the wives and children!' half the redcoats would have joined the greenboys; and even without them, the insurrection for a nation's life would have ended the British Government in Ireland. But there was no such man in Dublin, and there never will be.

I had satisfied myself then, and subsequently, that a rising at the opportune time indicated by the Government neglect would have been irresistible; but the revelation that even in the super-loyal and domesticated Catholic Church in Ireland there had been a bishop, with his priests

to back him, who was ready to take a pike for his crozier and to fight as a soldier in order that the nation might live; this astounding revelation completed all possible or impossible extremes of my wonderment at the escape of the Act of Union from its own work and policy. 'But did you not know?' I asked the venerated John Martin, ex-political convict in the suppression of Young Ireland, 'did you not know that the millions would have died by the bullets rather than by that death, if they had been only told?' John Martin passed his thin hand over his long grey beard, and only said: 'There was too much poetry among us, perhaps.' There was not too much poetry, but there was little else. Between speecing, boasting, place-jobbing; between ever-promising, never-performing O'Connell and the article-writing, ballad-writing, disinterested, somnambulist, chivalric visionaries of Young Ireland, there could be no other result. Perhaps, had Thomas Davis lived, there might have been the man.

If I have asked my readers to concentrate so much attention upon the famine as a factor, and the main factor, of the Home Rule movement, it is because I know that the famine was, and is, the predominant factor in everything ultra-national and anti-English down to the present day and the present hour. What was the hare-brained escapade of Young Ireland's abortive insurrection? Wrath and despair at the famine graves. What were the multitudes of hate-drunken emigrants to the American shores? Refugees from the famine and the callous wrong. What was the Fenian Brotherhood? The fierce hope that the valour trained in the American Civil War might avenge the famine graves. What was the Home Rule movement? The conviction of England's incapacity rooted in the famine ruin. What is the whole agrarian movement? The passionate conviction that the territorial class, which is believed—not quite accurately—to have aggravated the famine, has forfeited the last rights to forbearance, and placed itself outside the pale of humanity. 'Hold your farms for yourselves this time,' I have heard the Land

League peasant cry to his peasant audience. 'Remember the famine graves and how the black devils of landlordism drove your fathers and your mothers into those graves. Maybe it will be your turn to drive the devils now.' I write not as a partisan, but as a historian, as an editorial person accustomed to the ways of many lands ; and I say deliberately that one Irish child need not have died of hunger in the year of the potato blight, while the golden grain was a glory of the Irish corn-fields, and while British credit could have raised without effort fifty millions sterling, but did not. We have seen two hundred and fifty millions raised and spent the other day to have Prime Minister Louis Botha instead of President Paul Kruger.

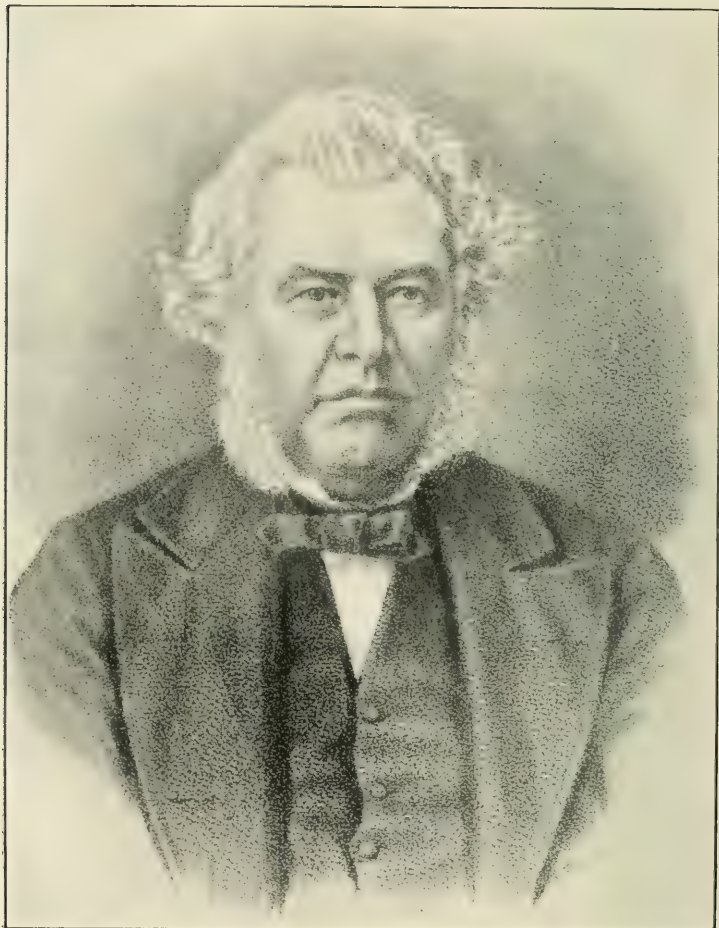
I heard Mr. Butt remind his hearers who were his contemporaries, and inform men of a later date, that the potato blight was not confined to Ireland, that great Continental populations also were deprived of their usual food, but that the Continental governments took precautions, prevented the export of grain, facilitated the entry of grain, started productive works directly useful to agriculture, kept the people on the land till the crisis had passed. 'If we had had our own Parliament, we should not have lost a single life.' Certainly nowhere in contemporary Europe, nor in bygone Europe, nor in Asia, Africa, and America, could, or can, any inquirer discover another government which, presented with the problem of a passing scarcity among an agricultural population, made the permanent abandonment of agricultural land the indispensable prerequisite of government relief. 'Not an ounce of food to Irish man or woman who possesses more than a quarter acre.' That ukase of economic idiocy and Irish ruin and death is the unique, the unparalleled, and unprecedented glory of British Rule in Ireland under the Act of Union. All over Ireland coroners' juries returned verdicts of 'Wilful murder against Lord John Russell.' He was the Premier of England. There have been millions of Irishmen since who brought in verdicts against the English nation. The coroners' juries who found the Premier guilty made no such

charge against the British people. As a matter of fact, distinguished Englishmen made legislative proposals such as Ireland required. Lord John Manners, as we have seen, demanded the prohibition of corn exports. He was supported by Lord George Bentinck, who also proposed a loan of sixteen millions sterling for railway construction, which would both have employed labour and developed agricultural trade. Manchester protested against official favours to Irish railways as unjust to English private enterprise! The Young England Tories, like all parties in Ireland, also demanded the use of the idle ships of the Royal Navy to carry food to Ireland. Manchester pointed to the hard case of British shippers who would be deprived of their profits on transporting the famine relief! At the same time two ships of the American navy sailed into Irish harbours with corn transported without any profit to American shipping interests. Manchester veiled its virtuous eyes and insisted that the example of the American war-ships must not be allowed to contaminate the economic correctitude of Britannia on her waves. Matthew Arnold's middle-class Philistines were ruling the 'United Kingdom.' Better that a million of Irish adults and babes should die with pinched and blackened faces than that economic wrong be done to one English shopkeeper. It was not massacre. It was not more-than-savage cruelty. It was business. That business of business men revived the worst hates of Tudor and Cromwell in Ireland, and has for ever deprived England of the alliance of the American Republic. To make that business impossible a second time was the fundamental idea and justification of the Home Rule party of Isaac Butt. Of course, even if the quarter-acre clause had never hall-marked the assembled wisdom of Britain, the Act of Union would have remained unconstitutional and illegal. But there would have been a difference. Now it was obvious to the meanest capacity that, in the favourite phrase of wise and witty Edmund Leamy, M.P. for Waterford, 'Even if the Westminster Houses had the right, Heaven knows that they have not the sense to

rule Ireland.' To conclude this chapter on a serious note significant of its grave and mournful warning, I will quote a couple of sentences from a speech of terrible pathos and passion delivered on one of the last days of the Home Rule Conference by that influential priest already mentioned, the Very Reverend Dean MacManus, from Clifden, I think, in Western Galway :—

The people and the priests of Connamara speak with no uncertain sound. They demand the restoration of their country. He could take home no other message to the West, where all men remembered how the people had been let die by the British Government. They died of famine, and the diseases of the famine, and their graves were dug in the floors of their own homes. Call it abandonment, call it bad government. There were 500 tons of yellow meal in the Government stores in Clifden, while the dogs were crunching the skulls of the hunger dead on the highway.

That was what a pastor from Connamara told the Conference. The same tale has been told for sixty years: at first by thousands of miserable survivors, and to this day by their prosperous and powerful descendants in every city and state of the American Union.



MR. ISAAC BUTT, Q.C., M.P.
The Founder of Home Rule.

CHAPTER II

THE ORIGINS OF THE HOME RULE MOVEMENT

Career of Isaac Butt—Federalism better than Repeal—Ireland's Share of Empire—No Single Chamber—Irish Gentry ruined by the Union—Irish Opinion ignored by England.

A PROTESTANT rectory in Donegal gave the light of day, and the Protestant University of Dublin gave education and training, to the great and kindly Irishman who founded the Home Rule movement—both name and thing. Isaac Butt was born in 1803, was brought up in old-fashioned Irish Conservatism, obtained the highest honours of his University, became Professor of Political Economy—which in his hands was no dry-as-dust science—became a distinguished lawyer, combated the repealism of O'Connell, sat without ambition in the Imperial Parliament from 1852 to 1865, and was a witness of all that the development of O'Connellism had produced in parliamentary misrepresentation and popular disgust, defended with sympathetic eloquence the prisoners in the Fenian trials which followed the attempted insurrection of 1866, was already said to have imbibed from his luckless clients a deep love of the patriotism for which they had lost everything, and almost immediately afterwards justified the generous suspicion by appearing openly at the head of a body of followers drawn from Conservatism as well as Nationality and declaring that the Union had failed and must be amended. 'Separation or simple repeal,' he held, 'was hopeless and injurious. The true solution was the federation of the Empire on a basis of self-governed nations.' Why expect the men of Manchester and Aberdeen to make good laws for the local requirements of Cork and Galway? Why force Irishmen

from Cork and Galway to frame the domestic legislation, and support or unmake the domestic administrations of Great Britain? The post-classic Latinity of Mr. Disraeli's exuberance was to present the phrase *Imperium et Libertas* to applauding Tories. In precise English, and with a wealth of illustration, Isaac Butt and his friends in the Home Rule League maintained the necessity of national liberties for a common Empire. In a federal arrangement which would recognise the full self-government of Ireland in all Irish matters, according to the ancient Irish Constitution of Kings, Lords, and Commons—no Gladstonian single-chambers and sub-colonial assemblies for him—there lay, according to Mr. Butt, all the national guarantees required by Ireland; and in the maintenance of the Imperial Parliament for Imperial and British affairs there lay all the Imperial guarantees required by the United Kingdoms of Ireland and Great Britain. So far as Imperial affairs were concerned, Mr. Butt insisted upon the complete and undiminished participation of the Irish representation in the rights and the duties of the common Empire. A generation before the recent talk—whatever it may be worth—about Imperial federation and Imperial brotherhood, the Irish National Premier, as Mr. Butt was entitled to be called, had proclaimed the fundamental conditions of Imperial unity combined with State and nation rights which formed, and form, the essential and indispensable form and substance of a crowned Commonwealth within the seas and beyond the seas.¹

¹ The influence of the fixed idea was persistently and painfully experienced by the Home Rule members who, season after season, tried to explain to the House of Commons that Home Rule was not Separation. As fresh as paint the objection came back after our clearest explanations: 'But you want to separate from the Empire.' I was driven on one occasion to a somewhat vigorous exaggeration to illustrate my meaning. We had been explaining as usual, without dissipating that settled objection visible on the very faces of the British majority. I was contributing my quota to our missionary efforts. Not a convert! Suddenly there came a sort of wearied, desperate interruption from that gallant soldier and most kindly gentleman, Sir Henry Havelock-Allan, M.P. He could not understand those Separatists mixing up Imperial allusions. He exclaimed almost indignantly: 'Will the honourable member say plainly what he does mean by Home Rule?' And I replied: 'Certainly, I will say it quite plainly to the honourable and gallant member. What

No British statesman, neither Chamberlain nor Rosebery nor another, can ever enunciate principles of Empire which can substantially change for the better the scheme of National and Imperial Federation which Isaac Butt laid before the Assembly of Ireland and Irish opinion forty years ago. It was frantic treason when uttered by the Irish constitutional patriot. It is the golden goal of all good citizens in the leading columns of London's leading press.

I would call especial attention to the completeness of the argumentation by which Mr. Butt established for the approval of Irishmen the infrangible right of Ireland to the unimpaired fullness of Imperial Union. There were, of course, plenty of men in Ireland who had no love for any connexion whatever with England. We were still very close to the days of James Stephens and his Centres who had spread all over the country within a few years the web of an insurrectionary conspiracy which included scores of thousands of members and millions of sympathisers. The leaders of that conspiracy, with the exception of the ubiquitous Head Centre himself, were still plunged in the living hells of the common convict jails, herded with the vilest dregs of civil crime. The punishment of political enthusiasts as if they were garroters and ravishers, and side by side with garroters and ravishers, was working grim exasperation on both sides of the Atlantic. But besides the irreconcilable alienation of the insurrectionary partisans, there was a great body of Irishmen of patriotic tendencies, who, without active hostility to England, had never before contemplated the possibility of benefit instead of injury accruing to Ireland from English co-partnership. 'If we have Ireland for ourselves, what more can we want?' Mr. Butt applied himself to convincing this important class that Ireland, for its own sake, had important profits to earn within the common Empire, from the moment that the Empire ceased to be an enemy to Irish nationhood.

I mean by Home Rule is Ireland for the Irish *and the rest of the Empire into the bargain.* There was laughter, but I believe even that could not get into the heads of our hearers that we did not want Ireland to lose a single one of its Imperial advantages.

Mr. Butt was able to remind the generation living in 1870 that, only a quarter of a century before, O'Connell—the immense Titanic name which was still fondly worshipped by large masses of traditional believers—had finally come to prefer federalism to repeal. In October 1844 O'Connell addressed a public letter to the Repeal Association in which the idol of the repeal mass-meetings openly confessed to 'a preference for the federative plan as tending more to the utility of Ireland, and to the maintenance of the connexion with England, than the mode of simple repeal.' O'Connell's quarrel with the Young Irelanders and his revival of the sectarian agitation against the introduction of united university education were soon to render this tardy conversion abortive and ineffective. But still it was the fact that the father of repeal had condemned his offspring. It was also true that, in 1844, the *Morning Herald* of London had attacked the Whig party of that day as having agreed with O'Connell upon the necessity of a federal arrangement between Great Britain and Ireland. With these historical antecedents in his favour, Mr. Butt proceeded to explain how federalism and federalism alone would give Ireland its due control and its due interest in a number of matters of high national value, which had risen into importance or existence since the day of the Old Irish Parliament. (1) Without federalism Ireland would have no part in the vast colonial system of the Empire so largely purchased by Irish intellect and valour. (2) Without federalism Ireland would be segregated and excluded from communion with the vast body of Irish people who were now living in the oversea dominions of the Empire. (3) Without federalism Ireland could neither give aid to, nor receive aid from, the great Irish population in Great Britain itself.

I quote some sentences from a public speech by Mr. Butt in the Irish metropolis on November 18, 1873. Clear, calm, and convincing, it deserved from all English statesmen the deep and earnest attention and consideration which it did not obtain. 'I prefer our federal proposal,' said Mr. Butt

to an immense assembly of Irish representatives from all parts and sections and classes of the Irish nation, 'I prefer it, not only because it gives better security for the connexion between the two countries, Ireland and Great Britain—better security against the arising of occasions to disturb their amity—but I prefer it even on grounds that are more peculiarly Irish.'

This was the true way to interest Irish patriotism in the advantages of the Empire, and the Irish National Premier took this way in 1873, when he was about to transform the Home Rule Association into that Home Rule League which shortly held five-sixths of the constituencies of the country. If Ireland quits the Empire, he explained, in his statements of policy, she quits her rightful place in a vast dominion of power and influence to whose winning Ireland contributed more than her share of valour and blood; she quits great populations of her own kin and blood in all those oversea dominions and colonies; she quits her own children and their descendants in London and Glasgow, on Tyne-side and Mersey-side, in the mine and the factory and the dockyard. Considered in this aspect, as it ought to be considered, the stronger the force of Irish nationality, the stronger the tie with the Empire, so long as there are far more Irish outside of Ireland, but in the Empire, than within its own coasts and shores. Yet a calculation so obvious, a necessity so statesmanlike, never touched the parochial souls of the Mere Englishers. Where Isaac Butt offered a union of interest and affection, they demanded and obtained a forced companionship of repulsion and compulsion. O'Connell might have been accused of forgetting that the Irish race had outgrown the horizons of Dungannon and Tara. There was not a single objection, national or imperial, to the policy of Butt. To a certain order of mind, however, nothing is so full of alarms—vague, indefinite, overwhelming—as national fellowship founded on mutual respect. As well address the veteran slaver on the higher quality of free labour. He cannot rise above the habitudes of the fetter and the whip.

I knew from personal knowledge of leaders of militant nationalism in every quarter of Britain,¹ that what raised the Home Rule programme so much above the familiar and unsatisfactory shibboleths of repeal agitation was very largely this assurance that reconciliation with the Empire did not involve their loss to Ireland, nor the total loss of Ireland to them. It was the immense, the invaluable distinction of Mr. Butt's relations with the earlier Nationalists over Mr. Parnell's subsequent dealings with the party which professed to continue the extremist tradition, that Butt only knew—and consulted—the home body, whose interests were naturally bound up with the Irish homeland ; while, as will be explained afterwards, Mr. Parnell consulted the alliance, and became the pensioner of the Transatlantic Fenians, whom residence in, and incorporation with, a distant and foreign State tended more and more to remove from knowledge of the real requirements of Ireland. The Irish Fenians had been exclusively the product of the desperate conditions which had prevailed in Ireland since the suppression of native government and administration. The American Fenians were American citizens, and their whole attitude towards the country which they had quitted for ever was fatally affected by their unconscious or conscious certitude that, no matter what might be the effect on Irish welfare of their experiments in revolution, they had become permanent members of a vast community quite intangible by the misfortunes of a European island. The American Fenian, dictating Irish policy from a platform in Madison Square or the Academy of Music, was perfectly safe from the worst results of any folly which he might inculcate upon the distant dependants of his dollars. The Irish Nationalist at home had to consider not only what might be suggested by historical reminiscences, but what was necessary for practical use and general advantage. When a policy, which united native self-government with British and Imperial connexion, was recommended to him

¹ I was during five years vice-president of the Home Rule Confederation of Great Britain.

by a patriotic statesman who had won his confidence by service and sympathy, he tolerated conciliation with the traditional enemy for the sake of the beloved land in which he dwelt and where he hoped that his children's children would continue to dwell.

It formed no small part also of the distinction between the Fenian allies of Butt and the Transatlantic sustainers of Mr. Parnell, that scores of thousands of the former lived with English comrades, whom they liked and who liked them; while the American extremist was more familiar with all the races between Greece and Lapland who had sent their specimens to the swarming marts and mines of the New World. Of course, these discriminations have no significance for the frantic school of pseudo-imperial Phari-sees and Philistines, in whose mouths Irish nationality is treated as the merest craze, when it is not denounced as insolent provocation as well. For the fanatics of this type Irish valour is something which can be purchased with a shilling a day—in the Connaught Rangers, for example—and Irish crime is the output of a racial degradation impossible for the Anglo-Saxon breed. Research which might reveal anything to modify these simple conceptions only exasperated the dominant opinions. So far as the London clubs were concerned, an Irish national policy which maintained the Imperial connexion and an Irish national policy which repudiated it were equally detested and detestable so long as they professed to be Irish.¹ In intimate and indissoluble connexion with Butt's retention of the Irish members in the Imperial Parliament was his

¹ I shall treat in some detail later the composition and characteristics of the irreconcilable elements among the oversea Irish, which curiously resemble, contrariwise, the violent anti-nationalism of the British Jingo. I remember discussing with an American Fenian, a man of the highest attainments and reputation, the future position of Ireland, after its nationality had been fully recognised in what would be an Anglo-Irish Empire. He suddenly exclaimed: 'See here, Mr. O'Donnell, if I could see England go down alive into Vesuvius or Hecla, I should say it was quite right; and the day that Ireland is reconciled on any terms with England she will be no longer Ireland for me.' This is no unmeet counterpart of the 'Union-though-it-were-gall' Unionists, except that the revengeful Irish exile had a past of appalling wrong to explain his attitude.

insistence upon an Irish House of Lords in the Irish National Parliament. Just as Butt's Home Rule wanted the whole Empire, so also it required the whole nation. The single-chamber anomaly which constituted the essential sum of the Parnello-Gladstone suggestion was deliberately and unanimously rejected by the Home Rule Ireland of Home Rule in its prime. I shall return to this subject in considering the introduction of the single-chamber proposal by Mr. Gladstone a quarter of a century later, when, in addition, the social dangers, which a single chamber was calculated to inflame and perpetuate, were raised almost to the highest intensity by the sinister co-operation of the vote-hunting Radicalism of England and the semi-socialist Agrarianism from America.

The whole question had been maturely considered by Mr. Butt and his advisers. It formed the subject of exhaustive debate at the Home Rule Conference called by the requisition of 24,000 signatories representative of all classes, politics, creeds, and professions of the Irish nation in 1873. A certain amount of hostility to the Irish peerage had not failed to make itself felt in the discussion, owing to the evil repute in Ireland of what are called the Black List Peers of the Act of Union. The Black List Peers were such members of the Irish House of Lords as accepted the pecuniary gratifications of Pitt, or had been raised a step in rank for their betrayal of the Irish Parliament, together with those members of the Irish House of Commons who, in addition to money bribes, had been honoured by Pitt with hereditary honours as Irish peers or peers of the United Kingdom. As the list of these offenders was public and notorious, the contamination of the ancestral infamy had largely extended to the repute and influence of the living descendants and inheritors. In spite, however, of the very human objections and prejudices against the whole order of peerage creations which were among the unpleasant *sequelae* of the Union bargain, the feeling of Irish Ireland was clear and distinct against any mutilation of the parliamentary tradition or any weakening of the

constitutional securities. It might be, perhaps, an awkward feature of our Royal Procession for the reopening of the Old House in College Green to have the irreverent populace of Dublin making audible comment about 'this or that fellow's grandfather getting £50,000 and an earldom for selling the country to England.' After all, that would be an inconvenience principally for the heirs of their grandfathers. I have myself known an Irish nobleman, who frankly sent to Hades his ancestor and Pitt alike, but who added that English whips of both parties could tell quite as rich stories of much more modern creations. It was perfectly clear to us that we wanted to restore the Irish Constitution; that no single chamber could possibly be the Parliament of Grattan, or could possibly be any guarantee to the interests of property and Conservatism; and that, on the other hand, the existence of a House of Lords, possessed of all the rights of the English chamber, was the best possible security against spoliatory legislation. It might occasionally be a clog upon some real reforms. But better a Conservative clog than a Socialist menace and a Jacobin convention. At any rate, we must have our Irish Parliament, the whole Irish Parliament, and nothing less than the Irish Parliament. The Parnello-Gladstonians were, twenty years afterwards, entirely to ignore this deliberate decision of the Irish nation.

Besides indicating the immensity of the gulf which separates the Parnello-Gladstonian arrangement from the Irish national tradition, the single-chamber incident illustrates anew the terrible injury to every Conservative institution in Ireland which was the inevitable effect of the Act of Union. The brand of corruption affixed by Pitt to the championship of the English proposals was the least part of the detriment. Never did a parochial limitation of view exhibit itself more characteristically than in the deliberate destruction of everything which statesmanship ought to have defended with the uttermost tenacity. Pitt not only dug the grave of the Irish Parliament, but he buried in it the influence and reputation—sometimes the

very existence—of numbers of the persons, classes, and institutions which formed, and were adapted to form for ever, the bastions and citadels, the reserves and auxiliaries of the Imperial connexion with Ireland. Mr. Pitt's assault upon almost everything really useful to England in Ireland was indiscriminate and deadly. As for Irish nationality it was certainly not killed, though it was exasperated to frenzy, which has not generally been accepted as any improvement. If it had been scotched, there might be matter for a certain exultation. But even Printing House Square admits that it has only grown more venomous, and that its implanting in the side of the English Constitution has led to Imperial perils which may become, if they have not already become, Imperial disasters. English policy, since the Union, has been degraded to catch Irish votes. English majorities have been made and unmade. English Premiers have fetched and carried, often at the beck of curiously unworthy manipulators of Irish grievances. The results have not been pleasing to honourable Irishmen; but they must be maddening to honourable Englishmen. At the same time, as I have said, every interest friendly to England in Ireland has been cleared out, bag and baggage, by Pitt and his successors, much more thoroughly than Mr. Gladstone was ever able to clear out the Turk.

The English Church in Ireland, the English land system in Ireland, the English aristocracy in Ireland, the English electorate in Ireland, English law and order in Ireland, English recruiting in Ireland, English education in Ireland; everything which the Irish Parliament had protected or favoured, whither is it vanished to-day? And nobody pretends that the Irish are the more grateful on that account.

Pitt, say his apologists, destroyed the Irish Parliament in order to strengthen the English position in Ireland. In Heaven's name, how? Long before Pitt bribed an insolvent or bought a boroughmonger, the English position was formidably strong in Ireland. The country was governed by a pro-English, if also pro-Irish, Parliament of the

King, Lords, and Commons, all devotedly and absolutely attached to the English connexion, jealous for England's power and glory, convinced of the greatness of England's mission in the past and the future. Even if an admixture of Irish Catholics were to be expected in the course of a few years, these Catholics would be men of substance and religion, perfectly certain to oppose Jacobin measures, even if they had the power to enforce them, which they could never have. The King of Ireland was the King of Great Britain. The House of Lords was at least as Conservative as the House of Lords at London. The whole body of the clergy of the popular Catholic Church was doubly convinced since the French Revolution that law and order were indispensable safeguards of the Catholic religion. The professions, the magistracy, the aspirants for parliamentary honours, were all devoted to the Union of the Crowns. What possibly could weaken this strong fortress of the English connexion? 'The Irish Parliament might differ on a question of the Regency, as it did before.' If it did, what then? But to establish a most unimportant uniformity in a rare and trifling divergence, the whole of that pro-English government and governing system, the whole of the pro-English influence of one of the most masterful governing classes which the world ever saw, the whole of those lords and great gentlemen and great proprietors, were to be cast, and were cast, into a swamp of impotence and unpopularity which was to swallow them up inch by inch in a quicksand, till they were to disappear for ever. Compare the condition of the Irish gentry, or what remains of them, under the Land League or the United Irish League; compare it from the point of view of British interests and Conservative security with the Ireland which Pitt undertook to make more loyal to the British Crown by the destruction of all its Conservative institutions; and what really has been the profit for England?

Butt and the Home Rulers wanted to rally to the national cause the Irish Conservative classes, such remnants of them as still existed, at a time when the destruction of

the Irish Conservative classes by the Union Legislature had as yet proceeded but a part of the way which has since been achieved. We had among our earliest members such men as Captain King Harman—he was one of the conveners of the Home Rule Conference—Mr. O’Conor Don, Mr. Bryan of Jenkinstown, Lord Robert Montague, Colonel Colthurst, Lord Ffrench, Lord Francis Conyngham, Rev. Mr. Galbraith, F.T.C.D., and many others. We should have had far more but for the injury which the Union had done to the governing ability as well as to the governing opportunities of the fallen class of the Conservatives of Ireland. The blow which Pitt had dealt to their power had inevitably fallen upon their capacity as well. In the body politic as in the material frame, you can condemn no function to disuse, no nerve of the structure to inactivity, without producing the results of paralysis and atrophy. When Pitt forbade the Irish Conservatives to govern Ireland, he surely and certainly made them unfit to govern at all. The men whose fathers had raised the miserable population of 1,000,000 after the Civil Wars to the 5,000,000 of the pre-Union period, whose fathers had filled Dublin with the only edifices which still enchain the admiration of native and visitor ;—the Custom House, monument of our lost trade ; the Parliament House, monument of our lost independence ;—these haughty and long-descended men, the scions of such a high and governing stock, had become by the Union almost outcasts from the public life of their country, and were equally helpless for the benefit of Ireland and the protection of Great Britain. The sorrow of it ! Pitt had thrust them out of their seats of power and authority, had closed the Legislature, had invited the agitator. O’Connell had come. The Repale Rint had come. Sadlier’s Brass Band had come. The Knight of the Battered Noggin had come. The Black Famine had come. The Emigration had come. The Fenian Conspiracy had come. The Land League was to come. The Invincibles were to come. But the governing class which had held Ireland—for the British Crown, if you please, but also for Ireland—were vanished and dead,

or unused and unusable, paralysed and atrophied in the unemployment and powerlessness which originated in the year of union.

I have often read in the works of Englishmen lengthy diatribes against the incapacity of the Irish gentry. It has been one of the stock palliations for their extirpation. But Pitt's Act of Union had been directly the death-warrant of their capacity and power. Wherever Butt looked in 1873 he saw Irish gentry who had unlearned national politics, and who sat leaning on their English expectations, until their English expectations produced the Political-Economy-of-Saturn Acts and the Henry-George-and-Tom-Payne Acts. First, they were to lose their lands, and soon they are to lose their demesnes and gardens! Pitt really founded the O'Connell-cum-Davitt sort of Irish patriotism; and had built the sepulchre of everything distinguished, and rich, and elegant, and eloquent, and influential in the Irish Houses of Parliament apparently because they had been unshakably true to the British connexion.

I have already mentioned two of the fundamental principles of the Home Rule League, as adopted by constituent assemblies of the Irish nation freely summoned and freely deliberating. These fundamental principles of Home Rule also form fundamental distinctions in opposition to that programme of Parnello-Gladstonism and Redmond-Asquithism which has never been presented to any constituent assembly of the Irish nation at all. These two distinctive and vital principles are, as I have said: (1) the restoration of the Irish Parliament for Irish national affairs, together with the correlated insistence upon full representation of Ireland in Imperial affairs upon whatever Imperial Council governed the affairs of the common Empire; and (2) the absolute rejection of a one-chamber legislature and the absolute maintenance of the Irish House of Lords as inseparable from an Irish National Parliament. There remained a third fundamental principle which similarly constitutes a fundamental distinction from the programme and practice of the parody of Home Rule

adopted by the British Radical party and its Irish followers or allies. This third principle was the maintenance of absolute freedom from official organisation or official intervention in every part of the national movement in Ireland. Considering ourselves to be the nation and the trustees of the nation we refused to be an organisation or the nominees of an organisation. When I was a candidate on Home Rule principles for the representation of Galway in 1874, although I was the sole Home Rule candidate, and although Mr. Butt personally addressed a meeting of Galway electors on my behalf, no Galway branch of the Home Rule League endorsed or selected my candidature. There was no branch of the Home Rule League either in Galway or anywhere else in Ireland. There was a vast number of active Nationalists who supported the Home Rule League and Council in Dublin as the authorised platform and headquarters of the movement. But all Nationalists were free. The constituencies were free. No central caucus had extended its dictation or its agents through the land. We considered that the nation included those who were against us as well as those who were for us, and we erected no barrier against the free adhesion or free dissent of all classes of Irishmen. The constituencies were open to all citizens. The local representatives of opinion managed and arranged. We might recommend a candidate, but we found it unbecoming and inconceivable to impose him. In those days Home Rule was no machine, no drill-yard, no wages fund. Better to be beaten with liberty than to win by a caucus.

The bare idea of one of those League conventions, which we have seen in operation since the establishment of an Irish Tammany, would have seemed to us so incredible, that it would have moved us to laughter more than indignation. The substitution of packed committees of branch delegates for open assemblies, of cut-and-dried conclusions for open deliberations, of mechanical consent for the just play of discussion and decision, would have repelled us as a profanation. That great Conference of 1873 which fixed

the programme and proclaimed the leadership of the Home Rule movement, was itself called into being by a public requisition signed by 24,000 Irishmen of every shade of patriotic opinion and every kind and class of profession, occupation, distinction throughout Ireland. Deputy-lieutenants and tenant-right farmers, Trinity dons and provincial aldermen, doctors, journalists, lawyers, landholders, engineers, shopkeepers, workmen; every department of national society contributed its quota. The deliberations were not hurried nor one-sided. The vast hall of the Rotunda was filled by thousands of auditors and speakers during four days. Courtesy without restraint protected and enhanced the proceedings. But mark the opposite way of the Irish Tammany. When the other day the authorities whom Mr. Redmond reveres commanded that summary rejection of the Irish Council Bill in which Mr. Redmond had collaborated, all deliberation and discussion, even a proposer and seconder were dismissed as superfluous and dangerous. Some hundreds of employees of the supreme authority led a couple of thousand packed and selected delegates of packed and selected branches or clubs. Ireland was absent. The mechanical gathering was not even trusted with the faculty of speech. The chairman himself moved the rejection of the excommunicate measure! There was neither debate nor amendment. The convention of puppets was terminated in time for the one-day excursionists to do some Dublin shopping for wives and acquaintances. That is the 'voice of the country' under machine and caucus.

It is characteristic of the relations between Ireland and the British opponents of the Irish Parliamentary Constitution that the perfect freedom of those early Home Rule conferences and debates, the care of minorities, the guarantees to individual conviction and opinion, were received with an attention and respect that were absolutely imperceptible. The noble gathering, the concourse of the most respected men of Ireland, were paid by the Philistine and Pharisee press of London precisely as much honour

and regard as a Huron powwow or a corroboree of black-fellows. The desperate protest of the Fenian insurrection had just been driven under by scores of condemnations to indiscriminate incarceration among the murderers and burglars, the obscene offenders and habitual thieves of British criminality. The ordered deliberation of scholars and men of business received a measure of English recognition not fundamentally distinguishable. The quidnuncs and the newspapers were occupied with the restoration of the Spanish Bourbons and the prospects of the French Republic! When we reflect what the neglect of that opportunity to respect Irish opinion has since cost the three kingdoms: the waste, the expense, the crime; the insecurity, the distraction from Imperial objects; the social turmoil and demoralisation—certainly not affecting Ireland alone—which have pervaded all functions of government; the permanent deformation and change of Parliament: this impolitic discourtesy has brought, it may be admitted, a somewhat heavy retribution. Even while the Home Rule Conference of 1873 was in session, and while the whole of Ireland hung upon its decisions, extracts were ready from leading London papers which assured their readers that ‘some 200 obscure persons’ composed its assembly. The *Times* added to the information of its public by gravely indicating that out of all Ireland ‘only 24,000 signatories’ could be found to support Mr. Butt’s project; this being the gloss put upon the list of people of influence and position throughout the country who had joined in calling the Conference. If you consult to-day that excellent compendium, the *Annual Register* of the date, you will be apprised that during the year 1873 there occurred in Ireland, in the way of remarkable events, ‘a fire in Dublin and a homicide in Leitrim.’ Not a word of the great gathering of the Irish nation. When I was starting for the Conference, the editor of the *Morning Post* asked me to send a daily note of the proceedings. My communications regularly appeared in the paper, in an unobtrusive place and in unobtrusive type. If I had written on Roumania or Siam, I should

have been printed in the leading column. So simple and so satisfying were the means and matter of knowledge by which Great Britain was wont to qualify itself for the government of Ireland under the Act of Union.

It will, of course, be necessary for me to notice from time to time the action of the English leading journal in Irish affairs during the period under consideration. That action has been too important for good or evil, and usually for evil, to allow of silence or indifference. The *Times* has generally intended to be just and honest according to its methods and aims. It has always been the mirror of the opinion of the most competent political classes of England upon the government of Ireland. If it is parochial, the very distinction of the body it represents may be said to be its parochialism. When the *Times* writes 'Empire' it means so much of 'England' as may be conveniently discerned from Balliol College, Oxford, tempered occasionally by reminiscences of select points of view in the cities of London and Westminster; but the impression of a select coterie at Oxford, of no particular descent, but born to patronise mankind, remains in the mind of extern readers as the dominant character of its type. The *Times* means to be national and patriotic to the core. I admire it for the splendid earnestness of its devotion to the ideals it has set before it. But I am sure I do not exaggerate in saying that nine-tenths of the weakness, the discontent, the public danger now existing throughout the Empire are due to the practical difficulty of getting facts to English knowledge past the barrier of the leading journal. Certainly there could be no mistaking the judgment of the Home Rule Conference upon the manner in which the national feeling of Ireland was daily belittled and caricatured by the *Times*. I omit some racier criticisms of the paper's action, and confine myself to the testimony of Mr. Kenelm Digby, M.P., and Mr. Butt himself. Speaking of the main assertion of the London organ with regard to the alleged insignificance of the assembly, Mr. Digby said:—

The assertion had no foundation in fact. Nor could they imagine that this conduct, and the repeated ignoring of the importance of this movement, were accidental. There was an intention in it—an intention to decry their proceeding and to make light of it ; but the day would come when those who speak and write in this way would be startled by the importance and strength of the movement.

I think that Mr. Digby's prophecy that events would startlingly refute those false witnesses of the unimportance of Home Rule would now be accepted even by the original offenders. The movement which our Conference inaugurated has shaken to its centre the parliamentary system of England, not to speak of more. Mr. Butt followed Mr. Digby, and spoke with much emotion and obvious regret. He had the gravest charges to bring against the Irish news department of the *Times*, and he was sorry to have to bring them ; for Butt knew what a difference to the peace of the whole State was involved in fair or foul play in such a matter.

I ask that great journal (he said) to insert the words which I now speak, and speak with great regret. . . . In the Dublin correspondence of the London *Times* a systematic course of falsehood has been pursued. . . . There is not a man here who will not endorse personally the statement I make, and have made, that a deliberate system of falsehood has marked the Irish correspondence of the *Times*.

I say no more at this point, beyond this. We knew—from the lord to the labourer, we knew—that the cause of peaceful discussion and calm reason had lost terribly by the action of the most influential portion of the English press. The sowing of the dragon's teeth had been again begun—not by us.



THE IRISH CUSTOM HOUSE IN THE 18TH CENTURY.

CHAPTER III

PRINCIPLES OF THE HOME RULE MOVEMENT

Main Principles of the Home Rule Constitution of 1873—No Interference with the Settlement of Land—Sectarian Legislation to be unlawful—Members of Parliament to be Representatives and not Delegates—The Act of Union in the Imperial Parliament—Non-clerical but not Anti-clerical.

I HAVE asked attention in the two preceding chapters for certain leading principles or axioms which stood in the Home Rule Constitution of 1873, which were ratified at all elections down to the triumph of the Land League and the Kilmainham compact between Parnellism and English Liberalism, and which have never been repealed or superseded by the free resolution of a national representative assembly. These fundamental principles demanded for Ireland: (1) No exclusion from Imperial affairs; (2) No single-chamber legislature; and (3) No class or party limitation on the public right of deliberative assembly in national affairs. The whole of these Home Rule principles have been violated and abandoned in the later development of the Irish Parliamentary party, and it will be an object of this narrative to explain the circumstances and the validity of their repudiation. In particular the reader will be asked to consider the import of substituting close caucuses or conventions of party delegates for the open and unimpeded conferences to which Isaac Butt invited the whole nation.

It remains to call the attention of the reader to three other principles of no secondary character which, along with the preceding, may be said to complete the Home Rule Constitution, and which, with unconscious prescience, were still more directly a condemnation of the Irish Parliamentarianism of recent years. This second triad of

fundamental principles were : (1) Guarantee against agrarian revolution ; (2) Guarantee against sectarian ascendancy ; and (3) Members of Parliament to be representatives and not delegates.

The distance which has been traversed in a downward direction by the Union Parliament itself is, also, curiously illustrated by the declaration of the Home Rule Conference of 1873 that home government and not the unsettlement of property constituted the fundamental need of Ireland. The declaration is contained, along with the proposed guarantee against sectarian legislation, in Resolution VIII of the Conference :—

That while we believe that in an Irish Parliament the rights and liberties of all classes of our countrymen would find their best and surest protection, we are willing that there should be incorporated in the Federal Constitution articles supplying the amplest guarantees that *no change shall be made by that Parliament in the present settlement of property in Ireland*, and that *no legislation shall be adopted to establish any religious ascendancy in Ireland*, or to subject any person to disabilities on account of his religious opinions.

The Irish Home Rule Conference desired to prohibit 'change in the present settlement of property in Ireland.' The British Parliament has thrown the Irish gentry to the wolves, just as it threw to the wolves the Irish Protestant Church. I make no criticism or examination in this place with regard either to the agrarian or the ecclesiastical enactments of England in Ireland during the past fifty years. But I am entitled to recall the fact that the most representative opinion among Irish Nationalists has always maintained that what is called the Irish agrarian question is entirely a result of foreign rule. The whole of the differences which in every country tend to arise between the owners and lessees of land were rendered acute and insoluble in Ireland by the divorce, the vast and yawning gulf of separation, which the suppression of home government created between the landlords and the people. The Act of Union destroyed both the social and political advantages

of residence in Ireland. The Irish landlord of social or political ambitions must go to London. Absenteeism became the distinction of Unionism, absenteeism from the family mansions in the discrowned capital and absenteeism from the disfranchised acres in the impoverished country.

The curious malignity—which was for the most part stupidity—with which London legislation had insisted, that the admission to Parliament of a discreditable rump of O'Connellite place-hunters must be combined with the outlawry and disqualification of seven-eighths of the Irish electorate, exasperated and envenomed all the causes of dissension between class and class. The landlord lost his source of influence; the tenant, his constitutional defence. The British Parliament took the electoral vote from the vast majority of the landlord's tenantry, who used to be the landlord's pride as he headed them on polling day. In French military phrase, the genius of the Union turned the Irish tenants into *bouches inutiles*. When Unlimited Free Trade became the craze of economists without foresight and manufacturers wild for cheap labour, the British Parliament, at one stroke, and by the one operation, destroyed the incomes of Irish landlords who delayed to turn tillage into grazing ground, while making it impossible for the tenantry to live by agriculture. When the famine fell on the tenant, and the famine poor-rate on the landlord, the British Parliament expressed its sympathy with Irish encumbered estates by selling them up without respite in a fallen market, just as it had helped the tenants through a season of awful starvation by refusing relief to every peasant who had not previously surrendered his holding. The Manchester School may be said to have excelled itself when it converted temporary destitution into permanent deprivation of the means of life. The landlord's Church was evicted like everything else, and a thousand Irish clergymen, because they were Protestants, but who at the least were resident gentry and purchasers of local commodities, were driven, 'commuting, compounding, and cutting,' out of

the country. A portion of their spoils went to form a new castle fund to be dispensed according to the exigencies of parliamentary combinations. From urging Irish owners to discard their tenantry, it now became the competitive game of the Westminster lobbies to excite the tillers of the soil against the owners; and the time was at hand when the Irish Attorney-General of a British Cabinet was to placard the County Derry with appeals to 'vote for Porter and Fair Rents,' the said Porter having a chief voice in the creation of Land Act authorities for cutting down rents. The Home Rule Conference might offer to guarantee property against revolution from below. But revolution from above?

If the Home Rule Conference committed a perfectly superfluous act in declaring against the unsettlement of Irish landed estate, when the unsettlement of Irish landed estate was to be a special and cherished policy of the Union Parliament at London, it must be owned that its proposed guarantee against sectarian legislation was not less contrary to another specialty of the Union Government of Ireland. I do not propose to inquire whether the sectarian policy of England in Ireland is beneficent or maleficent. Here I express no opinion. I am simply an historian, and as an historian I have simply to take cognizance that English interference in Irish affairs is always sectarian in a predominant degree. When the Papacy was against the House of Hanover, Anglo-Irish policy was energetically sectarian in the anti-papal direction. That was the blossom and the bloom of the Penal Laws. When the Papacy, alarmed beyond expression by the French Revolution and its unholy ways, promptly discovered the many apostolic virtues of the English heretics who were the doughtiest foes of the Revolution, and all but promoted King George to the Most Christian Majestyship of the guillotined Bourbons, the British Government in turn discovered that parish priests made much more substantial props than Orangemen for the rule of Dublin Castle. Mr. Pitt promised them Government salaries, and when he wanted them to

march against the Irish Parliament, they marched. The Irish Parliament had founded Maynooth College for clerics and laymen. The Government at London turned out the laymen, and gave Maynooth to the clerics alone. Lord Castlereagh at the Congress of Vienna was the foremost advocate of the restoration of the temporal power of the Pope in Rome. Pope Pius VII himself granted to the King of England the right of veto on all appointments to Irish Catholic bishoprics, and the flattering distinction has never been revoked. When 'Emancipation'—as the clergy wished for it—arrived, the devoted Government at London left the election of Imperial representatives from Ireland in the hands of the strong farmers and shopkeepers, whose sons recruited the priesthood, but thoughtfully disfranchised all the small freeholders who might have supported their landlords. When the Irish Catholic Primacy of Armagh fell vacant, the Duke of Wellington found no difficulty in getting from Cardinal Consalvi the Primacy of the Irish Catholic Church for his own particular crony, Dr. Curtis, who, as rector of the Irish College of Salamanca, with his Irish priests had rendered inestimable services to the Duke's intelligence department in spying out the strategy of Napoleon's marshals in the Peninsular War. Whig Cabinets were just as clerical as Tory ones, and the Whig arrangements left the permanent disposal of Government patronage in Ireland in the hands of the pious Mr. O'Connell, which was parliamentese for the venerable Board of Maynooth. When, in a forgetful moment, an English minister founded an Irish university for all Irishmen, the vigorous remonstrance of his most reverend allies promptly recalled him to his duty, and he left the new institution so carefully unendowed that only thirty entrance-scholarships of trifling amounts were provided for the poor aspirants for higher education among six millions of the poorest people on earth, recently swept by road-making relief and the quarter-acre clause. As there were not sufficient endowments to enable the poor Irishmen to enter the Queen's Colleges, the Government at London pretended to believe that it was the Catholic

conscience which demanded a strict clerical monopoly—such as has recently been an item in the retaining-fee which Messrs. Asquith and Birrell paid their Irish contingent. When Sir Antony MacDonnell, happening to be a Catholic layman, got a Bill introduced for allowing the Irish laity to have some control over Irish education, the stern rebuke of the episcopal ally convinced the Government at London of the monstrosity of the idea, and the Bill was dropped, as Irishmen say, like a hot potato. From tide-waiters to magistrates and judges of assize, the patronage of Irish appointments still remains in the hands of ‘Mr. O’Connell.’¹

If a nation of foreign Catholics, say the Belgians or Austrians, were to establish an administrative system by which schools, customs, legal offices, agrarian commissioner-ships, university senates, and poor-law boards were paid by the State but filled by the clergy, I tremble to reflect upon the nature of the language which would adorn the columns of London leading journals. What no independent Catholic nation in the world has tolerated forms the ground and method of Union government in Ireland. Here I neither praise nor condemn. As conscientious and accurate historian, I merely record the fact that the Home Rule disclaimer of sectarian policy was, to say the least, quite an irrelevant portent to the sister kingdom.

¹ A near acquaintance of mine in a Western city wrote to me a few years ago: ‘DEAR O’DONNELL,—I have a piece of characteristic news for you. I met Father Peter at the beginning of the week. He said the Bishop would very much like to speak with me. He had got a note from Mr. John Morley as Chief Secretary, saying that the Government desired to add largely to the number of Catholic magistrates, and would be glad to learn his Lordship’s wishes, as they could not think of acting without consulting him. The Bishop would be most pleased to be authorised to forward my name to Mr. Morley. You will be shocked to know that Father Peter ran away, very red in the face, before I was quite done with him. I told him that I believed I might go to the Bishop for his benediction, but that I did not include the Bench of Justices among the legitimate gifts of the Episcopate, and I had not been accustomed to associate Mr. Morley with any sort of Holy Orders. Your old friend Theo gave them much the same answer; but they have got two dispensary doctors, a haberdasher, who compounded twice with his creditors, and Big Bill the publican, who has qualified for the magisterial office by ceding his “practice at the Bar” to his brother. This always will be the Island of Saints, if England can manage it.’

The partnership between the British and papal authorities in the government of Ireland affords, of course, a tempting mark to the cynical commentator. Cynicism is a peculiarly unsatisfactory quality in an historian. Whatever my own wishes may be, it is difficult to condemn on political or religious grounds the Anglo-Roman co-operation which has mainly controlled Irish affairs for more than a century. From the moment that Mr. Pitt, incarnating and executing the English policy, had determined to take the government of Ireland out of the hands of the Irish Protestant gentry, since these had exhibited the will and the capacity to make Ireland a powerful and prosperous community, where could he have turned for a useful alliance except to the Catholic clergy? Especially after the ruin of the revolutionary party in 1798 there was absolutely no dominant influence over the Catholic masses of the Irish population except the Pope and the bishops in communion with the See of Rome. The violence of French Jacobinism had thrown the Pope into the arms of England. The attempt of the Wolfe Tone party to introduce into Ireland by the Hoche expedition a section of *sans-culottes* and deifiers of reason had filled the Irish Catholic hierarchy with no simulated terrors. Pitt's inducements were as natural for him to offer as for Maynooth to receive. The recrudescence of anti-Catholic fanaticism which the events of the abortive rebellion had developed in large classes of the Irish Protestants, coupled with the undoubted hopelessness of Catholic representation in the Irish Parliament so long as it was vetoed by England, easily completed a Unionist movement in the Catholic episcopate. The promise made by Mr. Pitt that Catholic representation in the Union Parliament would quickly follow the closing of the Irish Legislature must have revealed to politicians less shrewd than Roman Churchmen the splendid possibilities of influencing the centre of Empire itself by means of a docile and formidable contingent, capable, as we have seen so often down to the present day, of extracting the most valued concessions from the competition of British parties always in the market for

votes. Mr. Pitt was resolved to destroy an Irish Parliament which, though still Protestant, was already patriotic, as well as statesmanlike, which was a serious aggravation. The Pope and the Board of Maynooth saw the dazzling vision of England itself being directed by Catholic interference with the Westminster balance of power. How could two sets of negotiators, influenced by such pressing impulses, fail to come to a bargain? England was enabled to crush her former garrison and to sell to a bank the very Senate House which had sheltered the legislative genius and the golden oratory that provoked her ruthless jealousy. Archbishop Troy foresaw his venerable successors in possession of the power to make and unmake British Cabinets.¹ It was a clear case for mutual satisfaction. The only persons with any reason to complain were patriots, too weak and broken to do more than curse the destruction of their country, together with those discarded favourites of England, the Irish gentry, condemned henceforth to be third-rate hangers-on in a foreign and expensive capital, while awaiting the coming of an hour when compulsory expropriation of the Irish estates was to crown the compulsory appropriation of the Irish legislature. Mr. Pitt and Archbishop Troy had concluded the most profitable of bargains. And the dry-rot of the Empire as well as the nation definitely began. Merely as an incident, the haughty and heartless House of Parliament which had, like the boa-constrictor, swallowed its weaker neighbour, was itself to be stripped of the proudest of its ancestral privileges, and to be degraded to the Continental level of a gagged and closed Corps Législatif, by the plot of a few Irishmen who happened still to resent that illicit traffic in their nation's liberty and honour.

The convictions which are here imperfectly expressed

¹ Dr. Troy was the Catholic Archbishop of Dublin in 1800, and along with the entire body of the Catholic Episcopate in Ireland hotly supported the Act of Union. A letter from this zealous prelate to the Lord-Lieutenant, asking a remunerative place for his nephew in the Revenue Service, is among the minor curiosities of Mr. MacDonagh's volume of piquant research.—*The Viceroy's Postbag*.

were undoubtedly the governing part of the policy, the driving power, so to speak, of Mr. Butt and all his most trusted colleagues, together with several younger men, who were too unknown to be regarded as colleagues, but who were deliberately preparing to make their mark on the relations between the two countries. For instance, the Home Rule Conference was absolutely unanimous in the belief that the Union Parliament, besides being wholly illegitimate in its inception and warrant, was wholly useless or detrimental to Ireland in its practice and operation. The knowledge that Ireland never got a hearing, and that British reforms of Irish grievances were almost invariably more injurious than the original evils, drove home the lesson of history and confirmed the warning of instinct.

My readers will welcome, I think, the expression of opinion of a distinguished Irishman, who was the very opposite of a professional politician, who loved England and English society, and who will always be cited as a considerable name in English literature. It is the opinion of Charles Lever, which was read to the Home Rule Conference by the Rev. Prof. Galbraith, F.T.C.D. Originally part of an article on Home Rule for *Blackwood's Magazine*, but suppressed by that organ in conformity with the general principle adopted in Great Britain of meeting Irish arguments by ignoring them, the statements of Charles Lever were specially directed to the ostentatious indifference and obvious incompetence with which an Irish grievance was habitually treated by the Parliament that was empowered by the Act of Union to fulfil the duties of the native legislature of Ireland.

At a time when another Irish interest, the position of the Irish Protestant Church, was under debate, Mr. Gladstone himself had said it took something so violent and extraordinary as a Clerkenwell explosion 'to toll the chapel bell' with sufficient loudness to attract the attention of English opinion to an Irish question. It now happened that it was Mr. Gladstone, while arguing to an opposite effect, who had

provoked the comments of Charles Lever. Let me hasten to add that I mention what have been called Mr. Gladstone's variations, not to criticise, but to admire. The great Liberal was so great that he often accepted the guidance of experience and endeavoured, successfully or otherwise, to undo demonstrated wrong. Charles Lever directly exposed the English parliamentary system and habit of thought which tends to make an English parliament constitutionally incapable of legislating for a country outside of England, and, indeed, imperfectly adapted for any impartial legislation whatsoever. Pushed to the logical conclusion to which public exigencies are pushing it more and more, the boasted system of parliamentary and party government is seen to rest on a basis of inherent disabilities which can no longer be dissimulated behind the tradition or pretext of sacrosanct intangibility. What Lever had to state was this :—

When Mr. Gladstone proudly asks, Why Irish interests cannot be discussed and debated in an English parliament? the simple answer is, that, when so discussed, they must always be subordinate to the fortunes of party and considered far less with reference to Ireland than to the benefit of Mr. Gladstone or Mr. Disraeli, and though vital to Irish prosperity, will meet with little attention and no respect.

The system of party government, that quasi-venerable legacy from the glorious revolution before there was a kingdom of Great Britain or the elements of a British Empire, and which might share with 'The Peerage' the satirist's praise of being 'the finest thing in fiction that the Anglo-Saxon race has produced,' depends essentially upon the opposition of the outs to every measure of the ins, not because it is a bad measure, but because it might be creditable to the ins. If the ins can be tumbled into the ditch by the manœuvre, the best legislation which ever was suggested may lie at the bottom of the same ditch for ever, and everything will still be for the best in the best of all possible constitutions. The British party system, which frequently delays or ruins the most essential measures

of British welfare, reduces the wants of Ireland to something like the butt of general ridicule or general unconcern. Said Charles Lever again :—

Mr. Gladstone sneeringly tells us that of Home Rule all he knows is a statement 'that there is a vast quantity of fish in the seas that surround Ireland, and that if Ireland had Home Rule they would catch a great deal of these fish.' Now all I say is, that if we had a Parliament in College Green such a contemptuous summary of our national grievance would not be so safe as it proved at Aberdeen.

We cheered the resentful retort of the dead author—Lever had passed away the previous year—and cheered again as Professor Galbraith, invoking the testimony of all the Irish members of Parliament present, challenged refutation of the charge that Irish affairs at Westminster were habitually treated from every point of view but the interest or desire of the Irish people. 'How often must the members of Parliament, who are here present, have heard the expression: What is this? An Irish row? What a bore!' The scene was notorious. An empty House. A couple of official members and the group of representatives from Ireland. Attention and discussion among the Irishmen alone. But a hundred ministerialists in the dining- and smoking-rooms ready to vote the Irishmen down at the word of command of the whip. Sometimes when the Irish vote wants some cajoling for a pending measure of ministerial importance, a greater semblance of consideration might be accorded in appearance, but the evidence of Lever was still the evidence of every recent and every ancient witness.

Unfortunately, the defects of the British party system and the indifference of externs and aliens to the welfare of a country which was not their own, did not stand alone. There was the mingled neglect and misrepresentation of the British press. It was really impossible for Ireland, by any means whatever, to get her interests even looked at by the people who arrogated to themselves supreme

authority in their management and decision. Parliament turned a deaf ear. The press combined an offensive patronage, or a lecturer's tone, with indifference as complete as that of the House of Commons. I shall only quote another illustration of the deep indignation which made itself heard at the Home Rule Conference over the attitude of the British press. A most respected veteran of repeal, Mr. O'Neil Daunt, had been selected to second the resolution in favour of a Federal Constitution as regards the partnership with Britain in Imperial affairs. The resolution had been proposed with very great ability by Mr. Mitchell Henry, a wealthy manufacturer of Manchester who had become a Galway landlord and member for the County Galway; but the new generation especially waited with interest the speech of the venerable repealer. It must be said that the veteran presented with striking force and much eloquence the arguments which had brought himself to exchange the narrower scheme of O'Connell for a federalist arrangement: 'Ireland has an Imperial interest in preserving the unity of the Crown and the integrity of the Empire, but that interest will best be upheld by restoring to our country the right to regulate her own national affairs.' Probably not one Englishman or Scotsman was ever told that this influential representative of the O'Connellite tradition had accepted with conviction the Imperial position of Ireland as well as her national right. The English press! 'There is something intensely offensive,' said Mr. Daunt, 'in the tone of the English press in general with respect to Ireland. The writers affect to wonder at our dissatisfaction. They talk as if they were our lords and masters, and as if the measures extorted from them by policy or necessity were boons that should command our gratitude and extinguish our aspirations for national autonomy. It is always "We gave you this, and we gave you that." I really do not suppose that this is intended for insolence, but it is the acme of insolence.' It was assuredly a terrible aggravation of the situation that we could reach neither the British Parliament nor the British

people. The press was not a means of communication, but a hindrance and a caricature.¹

I wish only to give the essential features of the Conference, and shall therefore omit a mass of matters which both then and subsequently were of important but secondary influence. Entitled to rank with the position taken by the Home Rule Conference of 1873 on Imperial connexion and representation and a two-chamber parliament, as well as on the sacredness of property and conscience, was, however, its attitude against the erection of any sort of caucus or organisation between the national representatives and the constituencies, and equally against the degradation of the members of Parliament to the servile position of pledge-bound delegates. All the structure and network of conventions and pledges and blind obedience to a majority vote which have been developed and extended in the Land League and its inheritors were absolutely and contemptuously condemned and repudiated by the Home Rule leaders and all their followers. The difference between Then and Since is absolute and complete—abysmal and irreconcilable. The steps by which a theory of free government has been altered to a Tammany system resting on compulsion and pay are all the more important and instructive on that account. I do not suggest that the evil can be remedied. I am only concerned to record its introduction and growth.

By a curious and instructive coincidence the resolution which was adopted by the Conference, in preference to an

¹ A significant and conclusive example of systematic discourtesy shown to Ireland in the organs of influential English opinion may be cited from any copy of the *Times*. If we look for Ireland in its index of contents we can always find it among the Home News in this medley. To take a couple of specimens :—

Kitchen Committee.
Street Paving at Westminster.
Ireland.
Motor Accident.

Brown Dog Monument.
Smithfield Market.
Ireland.
Accident on Embankment.

Just a local item! Yet a hundred years ago we were an independent kingdom, famous in arms, of ancient civilisation, illustrious in oratory and letters. And, at the least, we are still an Imperial nation.

amendment seeking to bring in all those abuses of majority absolutism and delegate pledges now rampant within the Irish arena, was proposed by Mr. W. A. Redmond, M.P. for Wexford Borough, father of Mr. John Redmond, actual chairman of the pledge-bound combination actually in vogue. From the open conference to the tied and exclusive caucus, from the sole rule of honour and conscience to the compulsory yoke of servile dictation, from personal independence to the party pay-sheet and the party poor-box—the Poor-box M.P.'s being naturally in the pocket of the party paymaster—this is a fall, indeed, within one generation. The declension is confined to no single or particular issue. Hear, for example, this declaration of the Redmond of 1873 on the question of the dangers to property alleged against Home Rule, and repudiated by him with a lofty earnestness which seems strangely tragic to-day. 'Was there ever anything more preposterous than to impute a design against the rights of property to Home Rule—to a movement which was sustained and put forward by the industrious classes of the land, men to whom peace, and order, and inviolability of property were of as essential consequence as to the richest nobleman in England?' We have lived to see projects of universal expropriation substituted for all that honest security; and the only safeguard suggested to threatened owners has been the vote of a committee of confiscation elected by the would-be partitioners of their neighbour's goods! To crown the climax of the impossible and unthinkable, it has been a British Government in quest of votes which borrowed from Captain Moonlight this fresh indication of the value of the Act of Union as a defence of private estates.

The amendment which proposed to the Conference the establishment of a sort of committee of public safety under a mere majority dictatorship may literally be described as a rigorous anticipation of the system which binds the Irish parliamentary delegation to-day. It was moved by a Mr. Cahill, of whom nothing more is known, and seconded by Mr. Joseph Biggar, who was within a few

years to make himself known for work of another order, which would have been effectually suppressed before coming to the birth, if his amendment had been accepted by the Conference !

Mr. Biggar's proposition was as follows :—

That, to render the Irish vote effective, we recommend that the Irish members shall, after the General Election, form themselves into a permanent committee for the public discussion of every ministerial or other proposal which may affect the interests of Ireland; that no individual representative shall introduce any Bill or give notice of any motion of importance unless his proceeding shall be sanctioned and supported by such committee; and, finally, that the Irish members shall always vote in a body, or abstain from voting, in all party divisions as the majority may direct.

In subsequent years I often rallied Mr. Biggar, member for Cavan, on the completeness with which the moderatist majority of the Butt party would have snuffed his attempted activity out of existence, had his famous amendment been imposed as a law upon the Irish members. Poor Mr. Biggar could not even have 'given notice of any motion of importance unless his proceeding had been sanctioned and supported' by a majority, which was for a long time thoroughly hostile to his real or alleged obstruction. The fact, of course, is that the very idea of the independent action which was afterwards associated with his name was to him unknown, and remained unknown until revealed by a mentor who had better opportunities than the amiable provision merchant from Belfast of ascertaining and studying the possibilities of parliamentary and extra-parliamentary action. As a matter of fact, it took a considerable time and quite a wealth of illustration to convince the very considerable intelligence of Mr. Biggar, that in the direction diametrically opposite to his attempted amendment lay untold possibilities of trouble for the unfriends of Ireland. Mr. Biggar became one of the first converts to the new policy; but what luminous pages would have been wanting

to the records of the Mother of Parliaments had the canny enthusiast persuaded the Home Rule Conference into extinguishing his light before ever it was set upon its destined candlestick ! Beyond a certain notion that he was suggesting something very revolutionary and advanced, I do not know that Mr. Biggar had any perception whatever of what his amendment was calculated to do or undo. Its original author was Mr. Richard Lalor of Tannakil, M.P. for Queen's County, a brother of Mr. Fintan Lalor, who was one of the stormy petrels of 1848, and who, becoming an emigrant to Australia, was the first organiser of the political autonomy of the Australian colonies. Mr. Richard Lalor, M.P., became one of my own closest friends in Parliament, and, like Mr. Biggar, M.P., often laughed at the recollection of the notable project for organising the Irish party on a plan which would have killed beforehand the whole of the new parliamentary policy.

The objections to a scheme which would reduce the Irish representative body to a mere collection of puppets moved by the man or men who had, by any means, secured the control of a numerical majority, were felt instinctively by the overwhelming mass of the Conference. Any leader or pretender to leadership, who contrived to obtain the control of the least able, but most numerous part of the representation, would be empowered to suppress all initiative hostile to his own incapacity, and to make mere servants of the ablest and most conscientious members of the party. There were aggravations of this position, which have been developed in more recent times, but which were still unknown and unsuspected in 1873. It was enough to know that it was proposed to turn the Irish members of Parliament into pledge-bound delegates blindly obedient to a mere majority, however obtained. That prospect required nothing further to secure its indignant and contemptuous rejection. A leading spokesman of the Irish Conservatives who had joined Home Rule, the able and chivalrous King Harman, was the first to protest against the repulsive innovation. ' If they voted for the amendment,' he boldly

exclaimed, ' they would not bind rogues, but they would manacle and fetter the hands of honest men. . . . Every member of Parliament should be responsible, first to his own conscience, and then to his own constituency.' With unconscious prescience of what has since often occurred, Captain King Harman proceeded to say, with just contempt: ' Why not also establish a fund, and pay and dismiss your representatives after a week's warning like a common servant?' A poor devil, living on £3 a week, and entirely dependent for his livelihood on obedience to the manager of the numerical majority, is indeed the most subservient and dependent of common servants. He has become an item. He has ceased to be a member of Parliament in the true sense of the name and function.

The protest of the Conservative representative was instantly supported by the venerated Mr. John Martin, afterwards member for Meath, and the most universally respected exponent of the Young Ireland tradition. He had seen all the horror of the famine and the quarter-acre clause for the eviction of a perishing nation. Indignation had driven him to revolt, instinctive and unprepared; and years in the felon's cell of British repression had justly given him in the eyes of his countrymen an aureole of martyrdom.

If that conference (he cried) desired to have the national cause and banner carried by men of honour and ability, the fewer pledges the better. He certainly would take no pledge as to the exercise of his judgment in the representative capacity in which constituents might place him. He would never submit to accept the representation of a constituency that would ask him to sit as a member of Parliament on the condition that he swallowed such an indignity.

Mr. Synan, member for Limerick County, asked the Conference to reflect upon ' the effect in the Imperial Parliament of sending members who would be delegates instead of representatives.' Other representatives made similar protests against the dictation of a mere majority superseding the intelligence and conscientiousness with

which the true member of Parliament is bound and entitled to fulfil his trust. The final word was spoken, and spoken with grave and splendid language and delivery, by the Home Rule leader.

He believed that he would betray his own principles, his dignity, his personal honour, and personal honesty, if he gave a pledge that he would submit his future conduct to the absolute control of any tribunal on earth, except his own conscience, and that higher tribunal, his responsibility to God. He thought they would find that every high-minded man would shrink from pledging himself to act in accordance with the decision of a majority, no matter what that decision might be.

The Conference was practically unanimous. The proposer of the majority pledge withdrew his resolution without waiting for the foregone verdict of the assembly. On all the greatest questions which can engage the policy of a nation—the two-chamber parliament, the partnership and representation in the Empire, the solemn guarantees of private property, the maintenance of the representative above the delegate—the founders and framers of Home Rule condemned and repudiated the most characteristic maxims and practices of their successors in name, but not in principle. But the voice which spoke in the Home Rule Conference of 1873 was the voice of a free assembly.

There remains a single point of fundamental importance which deserves to be noted. The Conference of 1873, though full of veneration for religion and the ministers of religion, was above all a lay convention. Many clergymen were present, and were among its most enthusiastic supporters. Several clergymen spoke, and were received with applause as well as respect. But there was no clericalism about the gathering, either in composition or tone. I may add that it had not even occurred to the mass of Irish clergymen, whether Catholic or Protestant, to demand for the most exalted dignitaries of their order the faintest trace of that arrogant censorship of civil government in civil affairs, which is the most conspicuous

feature of many nations who have ended in decay. If wise and holy counsels have enlightened the souls of individuals, those individuals will bring their religious and moral principles to the right discharge of their civil obligations. The place of the priest is in the pulpit and the sanctuary, not in the Cabinet, nor among the Cabinet makers.

HOME RULE PARTY AT WESTMINSTER:
BEFORE THE ACTIVE POLICY

IV. THE SESSION OF 1874

V. THE SESSION OF 1875

VI. THE SESSION OF 1876



Photo: Wm. Lawrence]

RIGHT HON. COLONEL KING-HARMAN, M.P.
Hon. Secretary of First Home Rule Conference.

CHAPTER IV

THE SESSION OF 1874

From the Platform of the Conference to the Floor of the House—The Conservatism of the First Home Rule Party—The Disraelian Flippancy towards Ireland—Butt's Great Speech on the Address—Inauguration of the New Policy on an Indian Famine Question in 1874.

THE Home Rule Conference of November 1873 had been held with the certainty that the country was on the eve of a General Election. The Gladstone Ministry had already offered its resignation early in the year, the rejection of an Irish University Bill by a majority of three having led Mr. Gladstone to place the premiership at the disposal of Mr. Disraeli, who, however, had declined the succession in the absence of an appeal to the constituencies and also in the absence of a clearer matter of controversy than the abortive Bill on Irish Universities. That Bill was one of the laboured and inchoate structures which unsettle everything and satisfy nobody, which change so profoundly, but so incompletely, that all that is certain is that they must be followed by further changes, not improbably of the same description. The problem was the usual one under Union legislation, to redress an Irish grievance or alleged grievance in such a manner as to evade dangerous irritation of the English preponderance which was indifferent or hostile to Irish redress altogether. As Mr. Gladstone pointed out with great eloquence, the Irish university system was unsatisfactory. The Protestants had Trinity College, with which they were satisfied. The Catholics and Presbyterians had the Queen's University, with which the Catholic bishops were dissatisfied, as they did not govern it. Mr. Gladstone was advised, accordingly, to break up both Dublin University

and the Queen's University, and to make a comprehensive amalgam out of bits of both, which should exasperate the Presbyterian and Protestant Churchmen, but totally fail to grant the Catholic bishops the monopoly they desired. Mr. Gladstone was convinced that the Catholics of Ireland wanted a denominational university, but his facts were incomplete. 'There are 4,000,000 Catholics in Ireland. In the whole of the existing universities there are but 150 Catholic students in Arts, which is the faculty of university education. Therefore, the Catholic masses must be profoundly moved by conscientious objections when they abstain from university education in this manner.' Of course, every educated Irishman knew that the paucity of Catholic university students really has nothing whatever to do with a desire by the Catholics to be subject to an ecclesiastical monopoly. The reason is more prosaic. There were simply no endowments in the universities for the students of a poor population; and, even if there had been endowments in the universities, there were no preparatory schools in the whole island for the preliminary education of pupils destined for the university.¹ The primary

¹ A few extracts from the Minutes of Evidence before the Queen's Colleges Commission will illustrate sufficiently the brilliant efficiency of the Union Parliament's policy in establishing a university without any feeders or preparatory schools. To commence the construction of a house with the top stories is apparently the model in view. At any rate, the British Government established the Queen's University on the principle of a river without any source and without any tributaries, and have spent the time ever since in remarking that the absence of current must be due to 'the conscientious objections of the Catholic population.' In the character of Stage Irishman the British Governor of Ireland has been distinctly the greatest triumph of Comic Administration. Said President Sir Robert Kane of Queen's College, Cork: 'The very great deficiency of intermediate schools is one of the most powerful causes that have kept down the attendance, not merely at Cork College, but at the other colleges.' Said President Berwick of Queen's College, Galway: 'The fact is, if we rejected candidates who were not sufficiently prepared to enter, we should reject eight out of ten.' Said Professor Frings of Queen's College, Belfast: 'Very few of the students who come up to matriculation ever saw a French word in their lives.' Said Professor Bensbach of Queen's College, Galway: 'The pupils who enter the College know of German, nil; and of French, very little.' Said Professor Tait of Queen's College, Belfast: 'I have to examine the students who arrive here in the very elements of Geometry and Algebra.' Said President Berwick of Queen's College, Galway: 'Almost every Professor is embarrassed with a majority of elementary students.'

In fact, to sum up in the words of the leading Catholic organ, *The*

schools themselves were of such uniform and hideous inefficiency as to make—so far as the masses were concerned—the failure of a secondary school system a certainty had there been a secondary school system. Among all the absurdities and evils of Union legislation in Ireland, legislation on education in all its branches held, as it holds, a distinguished place for absurdity and evil.

As a project for the treatment of Irish education on lines approved by non-Irish legislators invariably marks the nadir of Irish national representation for the time being, just as an Irish Universities Act of such surpassing badness as to command the unanimous assent of both English parties has recently passed the Union Parliament, there was something of destiny in the fact that Mr. Gladstone's luckless project illustrated the session previous to the resurrection of Irish self-government by Mr. Butt. During the whole session of 1873 the British public and Parliament remained absolutely impervious to any reports that anything important was preparing in Ireland. The supposed susceptibilities of the Irish Catholic conscience, not remotely connected with the practical susceptibilities of the Catholic vote, had alone interested both sides of the House. Irish national convictions had not the slightest interest for anybody. The leading newspapers, as we have seen, professed to be barely cognisant of some meetings of handfuls of nonentities somewhere in Dublin, or was it Athlone? Then had come the dissolution, and Mr. Disraeli made the welkin ring with Mr. Gladstone's shocking neglect of the Straits of Malacca. When Mr. Disraeli—by that time become Lord Beaconsfield—next addressed an electoral

Tablet itself, 'Nothing could be more ingenious than the process by which the Government ensured the ruin of their own colleges. It was deemed wiser to dry the fountains before building the aqueduct.'

So there being only thirty entrance scholarships for 4,000,000—it was nearly 8,000,000 at the foundation of the Queen's Colleges—of the poorest population in Europe, and there being no preparatory schools to educate them in any case, the resulting paucity of attendance was declared by the assembled wisdom of the Union Parliament at Westminster to be exclusively due to religious scruples! At the same time, one hundred millions of Continental Catholics, all loyal to their Church, were attending purely undenominational Colleges, from the Loire to the Danube and Vistula, with perfect fidelity to their religion.

manifesto to the constituencies, it was to appeal with awestruck tone for help, help, against the gathering perils across the Irish Sea.

An analysis of the successful candidates according to position and standing will reveal the fact that the first Irish Parliamentary party to represent the new demand for Home Rule in the Parliament of the Union was composed to the extent of one-half of landowners, and in several cases of large landowners. Most of them were men who were well known for the good management of their estates. None of them had sought a spurious popularity by extravagant professions of any kind. They were all pledged to the moderate and Conservative programme of the Home Rule Conference. They were elected, either unanimously or by large majorities, by Nationalist and tenant-right constituencies enjoying the security of the ballot to register their choice without the fear of any unlawful pressure. If England had only known, or had the wisdom to act when she knew! But England repelled the men of moderation and station, and saw in their place the items of the Land League and the apologists of cow-hunting.

I expect that few Englishmen of the present day have the slightest idea of the real Conservatism, and landlordism as well, represented by the first Home Rule party in Parliament, which those blind leaders of the blind, the English newspapers, described as dangerous and reckless revolutionaries. Here are the names of some leading men, together with their constituencies; and the latter deserve no less notice than their representatives:—

Lord Francis Conyngham	. .	Clare County.
Sir Colman O'Loughlen	. . .	Clare County.
Lord Robert Montague	. . .	Westmeath County.
Sir George Bowyer	. . . .	Wexford County.
Colonel Colthurst	. . . .	Cork County.
Mr. Edmund Dease	. . . .	Queen's County.
Mr. O'Connor Don	. . . .	Roscommon County.
Hon. Charles French	. . .	Roscommon County.
Mr. Denis M. O'Connor	. . .	Sligo County.

Captain King Harman . . .	Sligo County.
Mr. Bryan	Kilkenny County.
Mr. G. E. Browne	Mayo County.
Major O'Beirne	Leitrim County.
Mr. E. Dwyer Gray	Tipperary County.
Mr. G. Errington	Longford County.

Men of large estates, chiefs of the Catholic aristocracy, leading members of the Protestant aristocracy, the peers in every respect of the fine flower of the Carlton and the Reform; such were these Home Rulers, pledged to the programme of inviolable connexion with, and representation in, the Empire, along with the fundamental right and necessity of the self-government of Ireland in national affairs by the King, Lords, and Commons of Ireland. If we study the constituencies which elected such Conservative representatives, what do we see? The County Clare, the County Westmeath, the County Wexford, the County Cork, the Queen's County, the County Roscommon, the County Sligo, the County Longford, the County Leitrim, the County Mayo; county constituencies which, since the rejection of Butt's Home Rule by British majorities, are associated with extremist principles and actions aiming at the very foundations of established society. Yet all these seats and strongholds of the most extreme agrarianism to-day chose to elect, under the leadership of Mr. Butt, and under the security of the ballot, the great Conservatives and great landowners whom we have recorded. Let me take such a disaffected constituency as the County Sligo to-day. Who represented it? Whom did it elect by free ballot in 1874? Mr. Denis M. O'Connor, brother of Mr. O'Connor Don, and that chivalrous Tory of Irish Tories, Captain King Harman. Nay, more, the County Sligo elected them without a contest, without opposition! Has the state of Ireland really improved, especially for the Irish landowners, by the British refusal to grant Home Rule when Home Rule was represented by the Deases, and Bryans, and King Harmans, and O'Connor Dons?

I have repeatedly called attention to the disastrous

consequences of the Act of Union for the English party in Ireland above all. I shall not cease upon occasion to press this consideration upon the thoughtful and impartial reader, and the occasions are to be found on every hand. The rest of the nation has suffered. Ireland has suffered generally, and in all its parts. The famine and the emigration tell their own tale. Still the Celtic masses remain who were the bugbear and the bogey of Pitt's imperial anxiety in Ireland; the Celtic masses have suffered terribly, but at all events they are as numerous as, and a vast deal more powerful than, they were at the close of the eighteenth century before the Act of Union. But the English party, the friends of England, the English garrison, the men of property whom Pitt 'saved by the Union,' have they been saved?

One general observation seems inevitable upon any rational consideration of these results of a General Election held under the full protection of the ballot only five years before the Land League. In this matter dates are most important. This General Election took place in 1874. The Land League, with all its furious and ferocious denunciations of the Irish landlords as irreclaimable criminals against the right of the people to the soil of Ireland, was established in 1879. Yet here we have vast popular constituencies of tenant farmers and avowed Home Rulers electing most representative Irish landlords with unanimity or with overwhelming majorities a very few years before the Boycott, and the Maamtrasna murders, and the Lough Mask murders, and the Invincible murders, and all the long and hideous list of outrages upon men and animals. There can be no pretext for saying that all these elections of landowners were produced by intimidation. The secrecy of the ballot protected even the most dependent tenant from intimidation, at any rate. Notwithstanding the secrecy of the ballot the Irish tenantry voted in great numbers for landowners who were Home Rulers. They made use of the same ballot to reject other landowners who were not Home Rulers. Five years later the same tenants mocked

at the same landowners, followed them with menaces, drove them to police precautions and police protection. It is clear that something was introduced, some virus was inoculated, between the Home Rule election of 1874 and the Prairie Rent election of 1880 ; and this revolutionary change was not produced by anything in the conduct of the landowners. Neither Mr. Dease, nor the Hon. Charles French, nor Mr. O'Connor Don, nor Captain King Harman had altered in the slightest degree in their management of their estates. Nobody even alleged that they had changed. They were continuing to act on the eve of being rejected in 1880 precisely as they had acted on the eve of being elected in 1874. Therefore the conduct of these gentlemen as owners of landed estate really can have had nothing to do either with the change of sentiments towards them in the constituencies, or with the alleged justification of the ultra-revolutionary laws relating to land in Ireland which were enacted by the Union Parliament in 1881. We know that the opposite view is held by current opinion, at least to the extent of making the Land Act of 1881 appear as the consequence of irreclaimable wrongdoing on the part of the Irish landowners. Yet here we have facts which cannot be squared with this theory. A line of conduct which we can call landlord-like is followed by popular enthusiasm and support in a certain year and country. Precisely the same line of conduct is followed by popular detestation a few years later in the same country. How can the unaltered line of conduct be the responsible cause of these altered and inconsistent phenomena ? Clearly the problem appears to be one which invites more calm examination than has usually been devoted to it. If an Irish landlord is justly condemned by British opinion as a social criminal because he and his class are driven from political life by the Irish electorate, what becomes of this sort of argument when it is found that precisely this same landlord, as well as others of his class, have quite recently been voluntarily and unanimously chosen to represent precisely the same electorate ? How can a man become a social or any other sort of criminal

in five years, by continuing to do exactly what he always did, and what he was doing five years before, when the Irish electorate carried him on their shoulders and dragged him in triumph in an access of delirious affection and enthusiasm ?

From the general puzzlement let us descend to a particular enigma. I have always regarded the case of Captain King Harman as one of the most painful tragedies of a period fertile in ruin of every description. There was never any comradeship, only the barest acquaintance, between us, even when we were both members of the Home Rule party. He had imbibed the prejudices or arguments of most Irish Conservatives against my policy, and I could not afford to explain or to alter it. Occasionally we came into collision both at meetings of the party and in the House of Commons. But I made full allowance for his views, and I valued the presence of such men in the Home Rule party as absolutely indispensable to the restoration of Ireland. He was so honest, so genuine, so characteristic, so chivalrous in his defence of Ireland till the catastrophe arrived. I had first met him at a public meeting, in Green Street court-house, in an electoral contest in Dublin. Tall, handsome, blond, he had a frank Viking air as he defended Ireland's right to self-government with a fine open earnestness. He was one of the original founders of the Home Rule movement. He had been among the original group of Mr. Butt's first followers. He was an honorary secretary of the Home Rule Conference. Unusually rich as rich men go in Ireland, his adoption of the national policy was at once an argument and an invitation to Irish Conservatives. Suddenly, without any change or fault on his part, he found himself hurled into an abyss of ruin by the legislation of the British Parliament ; while the dominant sect of Irish Nationalists, or claiming to be such, exhausted the resources of their vigorous appreciation in language of denunciation and contumely. Yet he had stood by Home Rule until the Land League had formally repudiated the Home Rule programme, and he had done absolutely nothing to provoke or deserve the ruin of his fortunes. The Union Parliament had done it

all, with the best of intentions as usual. Nominally he possessed a rent-roll of £40,000 a year; but £32,000 went annually for mortgages and encumbrances which had descended to him with the estate. The new Land Commissioners under the Act of 1881 were pleased to decree a 20 per cent. reduction of rent on the King Harman estate. That meant £8000 a year, being in fact all that existed between the total rent-roll of £40,000 and the £32,000 of mortgages and encumbrances. But as the great lending companies of London, which scientifically helped the Irish landlords of past generations to the brink of insolvency, could not possibly be expected by a London parliament to share the effects of a diminution of the total rent-roll, the whole of the 20 per cent. reduction of rents, the whole of the £8000 reduction of rent, was held to come legitimately out of the landlord's £8000 a year; and within ten years since King Harman had stood for Home Rule on that Green Street platform, he was literally and absolutely beggared by a legislative Act of the British Parliament. Perhaps because England had only robbed him, while the Land Leaguers were insulting him and all his order, not to mention other peculiarities of their action, King Harman became a Unionist once more. The British garrison in Ireland, the more it is sacrificed by England, the more does it fondle the hand which smites and denudes it.

I was elected member for Galway in this year of 1874, and my election has produced a permanent reform of the highest importance for members of Parliament for all time to come. Never again will any British Parliament entrust the trial of an election petition to a single judge. I had been a candidate in Galway, where it was said that some 400 electors were my kinsmen by blood or marriage. Kinship used to be reckoned widely before the increasing emigration had worked havoc with the old clannishness. Through my mother's family I was cousin to everybody, from the High Sheriff to the blacksmith on the bridge. A branch of the O'Kanes, or O'Cahans, of County Derry, or Tircahan, my mother's family had come from the north

to Galway County at the end of the eighteenth century, had intermarried with the tribes and clans, and soon could count kin between Clare and Sligo ; Brownes, O'Malleys, O'Flahertys, Walshes, Kellys and O'Kellys, Bourkes, O'Cloherlys, O'Connollys ; it was a fine faction to back a candidate for Parliament. Recommended by Isaac Butt, supporting the national policy, I appealed to all the cousinhood. The call of the blood used to be the best of claims in Irish Ireland. In Ulster I invoked my father's family, and, when I addressed meetings in Donegal and Tyrone, I had a cohort of O'Donnells, O'Dohertys, McConnells, McConneloges, McSwineys, and the rest. I won very easily in Galway. I was nearly double my opponent's electoral strength. And then it was announced that there would be an election petition. Impossible ! What is more, I was told that I was to be unseated, that the judge had been selected ; and in the Four Courts I found that all the lawyers expected my disqualification. The judge was selected, and I was unseated ' for personal organisation of intimidation.' The ' personal ' participation was required for personal disqualification, as otherwise I should be instantly re-elected. The charge was mere lies. Mr. Hill, the resident magistrate, was a witness, and gave evidence of the total absence of riot or disorder. Mr. Stewart, the county inspector of constabulary, gave evidence that there could not be a quieter election. ' It was the most orderly election he had ever witnessed.' Not a single witness even complained of having been threatened or impeded. But the judge had been selected, and I was unseated. That was Dublin Castle's way. It was a hard blow for a young Irishman of twenty-six. My opponent fled the new election. My next friend was returned. In London I found that both front benches also knew that it was ' the most orderly election.' And it was resolved to raise the strength of the electoral tribunal to two judges for the future. As I was not an English member, this was my sole redress. I was to benefit all succeeding candidates for Parliament in England, Ireland, Scotland, and Wales. Incidentally, the matter helped me

also. It threw me into extra-parliamentary work and preparation. I became a chief organiser of the Nationalist forces outside of the British Parliament. As vice-president of the Home Rule Confederation I formed the popular alliances, and studied the popular organisations, which were to help my policy on a future day.

While I was thus contracting additional debts of gratitude to the Act of Union, the Butt party in Parliament lost no time in pressing on English attention, however reluctant to recognise it, that something important had really occurred to change the political situation in Ireland. Much that was important in a party sense had occurred in Great Britain. The appeal to the constituencies had resulted in the complete overthrow of Mr. Gladstone's Ministry, which had not been saved by all the talents which so conspicuously adorned the Liberal party. Mr. Disraeli had a clear majority of half a hundred, and became Premier, while his illustrious rival appeared to contemplate the example of Achilles as a precedent for mourning in his tent, inert and indignant, the ravished charms of popularity. The change boded no improvement for Ireland. The versatile genius who now led the foxhunters of England had discovered that the Irish had always been taken too seriously, and made banter and jest the Tory specific for Irish grievances. After a brief exhibition of exquisite deportment by Sir Michael Hicks-Beach as Chief Secretary, the rollicking incapacity of the genial Mr. James Lowther was held to constitute an insuperable qualification for the post. For the rest, the desire to strengthen the Church of England and the menacing aspects of the Franco-German antagonism seemed to exhaust the powers of statesmanship of the new ministry. Undeterred by apathy or joviality, the Irish premier raised the question of self-government on the Address. It was to introduce an incongruous element of earnestness into the trivial world of Messrs. Tadpole and Taper. Having got place the new Conservatism felt the duty of repose. Indeed, it has often been remarked by over-candid critics that the fiery wine of Tory principle, which menaced to burst

bottles and bin in the cold shadow of opposition, when partaken in sunnier surroundings, comes to resemble quite surprisingly Liberalism-and-water.

By an exception, unfortunate or otherwise, to his promised experiment in abstention, the main reply to the Home Rule amendment came from Mr. Gladstone. It saved at least one view of the matter from perfect sterility and bathos, though it was in itself quite beside the Irish claim of right. The Irish had founded a considerable justification of their dissatisfaction with the Union Parliament on the notorious fact that appealing to that British House for Irish reforms was the sheerest futility. Mr. Gladstone seriously recommended perseverance in the futility. 'Why do not the Irish members resolve to bring in Bills for the redress of the particular grievances of which they complain?' The Home Rule amendment to the Address was consigned to the familiar waste-basket by an anti-Irish majority of six to one. The absolute indifference of the sister kingdom to an Irish petition was triumphantly demonstrated again.

During the session which followed, several attempts were made by the Home Rule party to act upon Mr. Gladstone's recommendation and to obtain the sanction of the House for proposals of Irish reforms. The solitary approach, and but a slight approach, to a favourable consideration of an Irish proposal was obtained under circumstances which spoke for themselves. The member for County Limerick, Mr. E. J. Synan, moved a resolution on the condition of the Irish Fisheries, which had been avowedly neglected and discouraged by successive administrations, and recommending a small Treasury grant-in-aid of £20,000. The Conservative Government point-blank refused the request, but the division showed ninety-five for the Irish Fisheries against ninety-three in support of the hostile Treasury. The result had been obtained in a way which indicated that Mr. Disraeli's specific of farcical treatment in Irish questions was capable sometimes of being retorted on its patentees. At that time the St. Stephen's Club

on the Embankment was a favourite dining-resort of the Conservative members, scores of them usually preferring its hospitality to the care of the Kitchen Committee. An Irish member, Mr. Philip Callan, well known as an all-round sportsman in his native county of Louth, had observed that a convenient extension connected the division bells of the House with the dining-rooms of the club, and the diners could arrive in the lobbies in time for the vote. Providing himself with an efficient wire-cutter, he snipped the connecting wire, and warned his amused colleagues that a snap division might leave the Government without the support of the festive clubmen. We took the hint with alacrity—I had not yet been unseated—and the happiest consequence followed. The Government whips stared in expectation at the door from which the absent ones were wont to rush to the rescue of a Government measure, but on this occasion the watch was in vain. Before a messenger could be tardily sent on foot to warn the club of the inexplicable occurrence on the wire, the division had been taken, and the Government had been beaten by a majority of two, while fifty belated and indignant arrivals stood at the wrong side of the portal of admission. Owing largely, I believe, to the sporting equity of Mr. James Lowther, who protested that the Irish had fairly won the trick, the Government did not insist upon a formal undoing of the victory, but they watered their concession down to very little. That little was the first beginning of what might have been a great benefit if responsible Irish authorities had governed the wise administration of public subvention; but in the form which British policy in Ireland preferred as usual to employ, it became that vast engine of popular demoralisation and undue influence, the so-called Congested Districts institution, which spreads State Socialism, rewards pious obedience, and inculcates the expropriation of landed estate and the selection of parliamentary representatives throughout a dozen counties. It seems rather bad to have an Irish request rejected by the British Government. It is infinitely worse, as a rule, to have it granted.

On the whole, the session of 1874 deserves to be called rather an ecclesiastical session. Projects for improving or restoring the rights of the Church of England in foundation schools as well as 'the Bill to put down Ritualism' did not interest Irish representatives very keenly, nor did many of them foresee the possibility of developments which would have grave effects on the internal condition of Ireland also. Yet attentive observers, with more familiarity with English politics than is usually possessed by gentlemen from Shannon shore, had been prepared for such consequences ever since the rejection of Mr. Gladstone's Irish University measure had convinced that statesman that he was face to face with an underhand intrigue between the Carlton Club and Maynooth College. The sort of quadrangular duel which was waged between Mr. Gladstone, Mr. Disraeli, Sir William Harcourt, and Lord Salisbury on all possible deductions and corollaries from the proposals and counter-proposals of ecclesiastical legislation before the House, diverted the spectators far more than it elucidated the dispute. But in the whole attitude of Mr. Gladstone there was a distinct foreshadowing of what he intended to say upon Vaticanism and civil allegiance. He felt that he had been badly treated by the Irish Catholic bishops and he was quite prepared to horse them on papal infallibility or anything else, provided only he could give them the castigation which he held to be their just reward. The autumn, however, was passing before Mr. Gladstone got his desired opportunity or pretext.

The skill, courtesy, and courage of Mr. Butt succeeded in obtaining, besides the discussion on the Address which I have already mentioned, two days from the Government, at the end of June and commencement of July, for a set debate on the Home Rule demand. When the Home Rule debate took place, it was admitted by friend and foe alike that the premier of the Irish representatives had made a very great speech, and that the eloquence of the old Irish legislature had woke to new life on the lips of its new and venerable defender. Though Mr. Disraeli was to

pursue, and excel or exceed, his policy of jesting with the Irish, there could be no doubt that the Home Rule leader had produced a profound impression on the House, and a still deeper impression upon the British masses. In the course of my organising journeys, as vice-president of the Home Rule Confederation, to all parts of the country, from Devonport to Dundee, I was continually coming in contact with Englishmen, mostly the superior class of workmen, and many members of the professions, who had preserved copies of Mr. Butt's address, often supplementing the report in one newspaper by collated extracts from others. He gave the constitutional history of Ireland in much detail and with that stately clearness which made him a great advocate at the Irish bar. He related the acknowledged right of the Irish Parliament, solemnly acknowledged by England within less than a generation before England's suppression of Ireland's right. He gave the odious means employed by the violators of the Irish Constitution. He gave the miserable consequences to a nation of being deprived in every national emergency, however intimate and serious, of the power of dealing with the most urgent need by the chosen intelligence and cultured patriotism of the suffering commonwealth. An attorney-general who sat for Trinity College, Dublin, that academic stepping-stone to attorney-generalships and judgeships of assize for Conservative barristers from Ireland, supplied an official reply. Whig and Tory—Lord Hartington, Sir Michael Hicks-Beach, and Mr. Lowe—contributed their quota of objections against the Irish claim. Then Mr. Disraeli rose to the occasion. He was lofty, he was tragical, he was expostulatory—above all, he was brilliantly entertaining and amusing.

The Irish had a strange passion for calling themselves a conquered people. He failed to perceive when or where they had been conquered. It might be urged that they had been conquered by Cromwell. What of that? Had not Cromwell previously conquered England? Why should his eloquent and imaginative friends try to extract a peculiar grievance out of a common misfortune? England had com-

pletely recovered from Marston Moor. If Ireland had suffered a Marston Moor, why continue to deplore it?

With this charming prattle the distinguished politician kept the House in a roar. Honourable members guffawed, poked themselves in the ribs. The notion was too good. How delightful to tell the Irish that they only fancied that they were under the heel of a conqueror. And 1798? And the Union? And the disfranchisement of the small freeholders? And the famine? And the eviction of the starving nation? And the vast emigration? And the scores of men, without a stain in their lives, who were even then in felon-convict cells for attempted insurrection on behalf of the ancient right? So Mr. Disraeli jested, and the House was hugely tickled; and the Home Rule motion, technically a motion for a committee to inquire into the Irish national demand, was voted down by a tremendous majority. So ended the first session of the Home Rule party in the Imperial Parliament. I met a great friend of mine, a journalist colleague and valued comrade, on the evening after the rejection of Mr. Butt's motion. My readers will hear of my friend in another chapter. 'Of course, Disraeli is quite correct,' he smiled. 'The Man of Mystery ought to be one of us. Ireland is a very long way from being conquered, in spite of election decisions.' An allusion to my recent mishap, which can also bear some additional explanation.

I believe that Mr. Disraeli, though he amused the House at our expense, and though it was impossible for him, in his position and with his amount of knowledge of Ireland, to side with us, was very far from intentional hostility to Irish claims. His cosmopolitan spirit never descended to the nadir of prejudice of the British Philistine. He had been known to speak of the island of sorrows with some of the sympathetic imagery appropriate to his own persecuted race. Never under any circumstances indeed could he have consented to the partial separatism involved in a subsequent proposal to exclude Ireland from Imperial representation. But I am quite certain—and I have some special reasons

for my view—that his political intelligence was perfectly equal to the problem, under certain conditions, of reconciling a Speech from the Throne in the Old House in College Green with the functions of an Imperial Assembly at Westminster really representative of the whole Empire, its nations and dominions. I know this anyhow, that when Lord Beaconsfield was directed to my declaration of political views in some ‘Parliamentary Companion’ of Dod or Debrett and read my programme of ‘Representation of India in Parliament,’ the old statesman said, with a flicker of a smile: ‘Has the young rebel stolen our thunder?’ When Lord Beaconsfield took his fatal illness, I had been favoured with two or three invitations to be presented to him, though by that time I had a long list of parliamentary disrecommendations to my name. But the Conservative chief knew that I had voted against the Marquis of Hartington’s motion on the Eastern question; and, besides, Mr. Disraeli considered that I had once saved him from a rather ugly rush of the faithful Commons, for which he had sent Mr. Montague Corry very specially to thank me.¹ I should

¹ I had first been violently jostled myself, before I saw who was my neighbour. I was a very powerful athlete, and I squared shoulders and elbows first to save myself, and then, as I observed Mr. Disraeli’s alarm, I pushed very vigorously to keep off pressure from the frail, commanding figure; but it was Sir John Astley who really thrust aside the moblike crowd. It was said among some of us long afterwards, when he became Lord Beaconsfield, that ‘Disraeli had gone into the Upper House to escape the bad manners of the Commons in a rush.’ I was quite unaware that Mr. Disraeli had recognised me, till I received a message to see Mr. Montague Corry in the lobby. Mr. Corry was afterwards made Lord Rowton by his patron and friend. Friend and acquaintance agreed that he was a man of singular brilliancy and charm.

I find one of Mr. Montague Corry’s brief notes about a meeting with me which he had to postpone.

HATFIELD HOUSE :

February 7, 1879.

DEAR SIR,

I find I shall be here, till probably Tuesday, and cannot hope to see you so soon. Your letter is of much interest.

Let me hope to have the pleasure of meeting you in the Lobby next week, when, perhaps, you will make some arrangement for our having some conversation.

I am, very faithfully yours,

MONTAGUE CORRY.

F. H. O'DONNELL, Esq., M.P.

In war or in peace I must admit that I always found English statesmen and their intimates the pink of courtesy, fairness, and considerateness.

have been honoured to know Lord Beaconsfield, if I had not been kept back from the compromising acquaintance by the necessity of managing some time longer Irish popular sentiment or opinion, if it could be called opinion. It was really the case that I had not a perfectly free hand for the new Irish policy until the Land League constituted an absolutely impassable barrier between me and an Irish seat in Parliament. I became essentially an isolated player. That was also my advantage. I knew the board. And I knew the pieces.

In this connexion I must mention, with a view to subsequent developments, that I had played already an isolated game according to my own plan within the first weeks of my brief stay in Parliament in 1874. It was on the occasion of the threatened famine in Behar in that year, and the refusal of the Viceroy Lord Northbrook to sanction the prohibition of the export of grain recommended by the able Lieutenant-Governor Sir George Campbell. I had a vivid impression of the criminal folly of the British Government in 1846 and 1847 in permitting the export of the rich Irish harvests of corn, while millions of the people were starving through the failure of the potato crop, which was their habitual food. As they could not get potatoes, they should have got bread. Nobody need starve. But the Manchester economists had decided otherwise in Ireland, where one-sixth of the people had to starve outright. Now it seemed to me there was to be something similar in India. In order to silence critics the Government of India issued a Blue-book with the correspondence between the Viceroy and the Lieutenant-Governor. This gave me my chance. In the Blue-book the Viceroy's communications were given in full, but Sir George Campbell's views in brief extracts. It was quite impossible to follow the Lieutenant-Governor's case. The official scissors had eviscerated it. I had early formed important connexions with native India. I gave a notice of motion on the garbling of documents and the suppression of one side of the question. My task was simple. I had only to read some lengthy extracts given

at length on the official side, and then contrast them with the snips of summary attributed to Sir George Campbell. Five pages of official amplification. Half a page of halting summary for the Lieutenant-Governor. Officialism suffered a heavy exposure. Its own procedure convicted it. My maiden speech got a column and over in the *Times*. Many newspapers supported me. The affair became quite an event in India. All that, besides, was an example of Irish intervention in the most important affairs of the Empire ; and, as the reader will recognise again, I was vitally interested in the advocacy of this policy. Thanks to the selected election judge I could not resume in the House of Commons till June 1877 the sort of demonstration which I began in April 1874. But I enjoyed the priority, and my whole policy profited by the apposite illustration. If Irish intervention could reach India, why not South Africa ? Why not the Civil Service as well as the Indian Viceroyalty ? Why not the Diplomatic Service as well as the Home Office ? Why not Army Discipline Acts as well as the Merchant Shipping Acts ? It only wanted knowledge, courage, and skill.

CHAPTER V

THE SESSION OF 1875

The Second Session of the Home Rule Parliamentary Party—Mr. Gladstone's Polemics—'Vaticanism,' Mr. James Lowther, and Maynooth—Mr. John Mitchell and Mr. John Martin—The Foundation of Irish Obstruction—Mr. A. M. Sullivan, M.P., is the Founder—Coercion and Obstruction—Isaac Butt in the Fray—Isaac Butt and the Marquis of Hartington—The O'Connell Centenary and an Anti-Butt Intrigue—Enemies of Home Rule in Ireland—Peter Paul Puppet MacSweeney—The Fall of Mr. P. J. Smythe, M.P., and some others.

THE second session of the Home Rule Parliamentary party showed at once that Mr. Butt and his followers had found their sea-legs, and their daring craft was going to be fought and manœuvred with skill and resolution. Nothing can exceed the error of the current tradition that parliamentary obstruction was revived by Mr. C. S. Parnell, M.P. Mr. C. S. Parnell was not in the House at all in those months of 1875 when Mr. Butt, Mr. A. M. Sullivan, and the Irish party fell sword in hand upon a new Coercion Bill, hacked it, blocked it, fought it, and, though they could not stop it, made its discussion a weariness and a vexation to Whigs and Tories, and a ringing trumpet to Ireland, awaking old memories and preparing new resistance. Mr. C. S. Parnell was absent from the House during the whole of 1874 and the first half of 1875. His attempt to represent Dublin County at the General Election had failed in presence of the Tory preponderance on the electoral register. He had just failed as I passed through Dublin on my successful election for Galway, which two months afterwards was to be quashed by the selected petition judge. Meeting him casually at a couple of political resorts he had congratulated me on my better fortune. I liked him at once. He was slight and slightly nervous, anxious to please, while modestly

firm in his own opinions. At the very first sight, he reminded me strikingly of his very beautiful sister, Miss Fanny Parnell, whom I had seen at some Paris houses, where the young American beauty, as she was generally called, was always the centre of enthusiastic worshippers of her loveliness and wit. I heard her called the most beautiful woman in Paris, at least outside the noble Faubourg. She lived with an American relative, an uncle I think. Her brother Charles had just her way of looking with a peculiar wondering glance, which was not wonder at all, but critical observation. I think she was his favourite sister. She was certainly most intelligent. So was he, though almost phenomenally ignorant of everything which a public man must know if he is to be much more than an item or a figure-head. But I thought that he had one quality which has often made men like him go far. He betrayed acute family pride amounting to conceit on little provocation, and this family pride seemed to have been bitterly affronted by a number of persons and families of his class, local aristocrats of English descent in Dublin, Wicklow, and the neighbourhood. He reminded me of one of those *ci-devants* in the train of Mirabeau, who had quarrelled with their order and thirsted to humiliate it. On a limited scale C. S. Parnell was a *grand seigneur manqué*, and that explained both his indiscriminate hatred of the Irish landlords, certainly no better than himself, among whom he was almost a *déclassé*, as well as his petty arrogance to his own followers, when they had elevated him to a giddy height, from which they hastened to drop him just because they had stood him too long. Within his limitations he was as pretty a fighter as man could desire. He was decidedly shrewd. But it took a lot of teaching to make him see that there was a fight to be made. The grotesque frame of the wealthy provision merchant, kindly J. G. Biggar, disguised from casual eyes far greater keenness of apprehension and far nobler ideals of country and friendship.

But this is all episodal, because when obstruction commenced in 1875 in the service of Ireland at Westminster

neither Parnell nor I was there. I, indeed, never believed in mere obstruction, beyond an affair of outposts, or a demonstration to cover the real attack, or a flashy advertisement to attract an over-imaginative community.

If you study English records of these times of the more intelligent class, you will not fail to read plenty of recognitions that what the Englishman of every correct political party loves to abuse as shameless obstruction was in full career in Parliament under Isaac Butt in this year of 1875, long before Mr. C. S. Parnell had signed the book and taken the oath as member for Meath. Taking, for instance, the *Annual Register* for the year, we find at once, p. 16 :—

One great cause which tended to obstruct the progress of general parliamentary business this year was the lengths to which the debates on the Irish Coercion Act were carried.

Introduced on March 1, the second reading was only carried on the 23rd.

Long debates and numerous divisions followed during the passage of the Bill through Committee. The Irish members were never weary of raising objections, and their leaders, Mr. Butt and Mr. Sullivan, manifested much ingenuity and some force of language and argument. They persevered in bringing forward amendment after amendment, never seeming to know when they were beaten.

No higher compliment could be desired by Irishmen for the parliamentary activity of their representatives, no clearer recognition was ever accorded by the English press to the obstructive lengths to which Irish members of Parliament were prepared to go in the good cause of their country. Yes, Butt and Sullivan obstructed, obstructed doggedly, obstructed intelligently, long, long before Parnell had tried the game, long before he had even appeared in Parliament at all. Butt and Sullivan did not adopt the mere brickwall tactics of trying to stop absolutely the legislation, good, bad, or indifferent, of a sovereign Parliament, which must have force on its side in the last extremity. Butt and Sullivan were not fools or puppets. Neither did I ever

desire a place in either category. Constitutional obstruction might have lasted till doomsday.¹ Extremist obstruction absolutely invited and necessitated the closure. In the matter of obstruction, in fact, it should have been foreseen that there were only two alternatives: either an elusive, evasive, and all-pervading intervention which nothing and nobody could repress; or bull-headed, mulish hindrance and impediment which must be removed at any cost to the liberties of Parliament. The mulish variety united the suffrages of the honest creatures who were to cheer Messrs. William O'Brien and John Dillon in declaring, that 'with thirty good men Parnell could stop the whole British Parliament.'

Having made these anticipatory observations on a point of parliamentary history which has been deliberately misrepresented as part of the stock-in-trade of make-believe innovators who were only imitators who bungled, I proceed to trace the main events of an eventful session. Premising that the European situation during the year 1875 produced changes which permanently modified the constitution of leading kingdoms and states—I need only mention the definite ratification of the Republic in France through the broils of the monarchist rivals, the contrary event of the definite rejection of the Republic in Spain by the restoration of King Alphonso XII, and the persistent persecution of the Catholic Church in Germany for acceptance of the Vatican Council—the great and alarming feature of the foreign outlook was the design of the German militarist party anxious to interrupt the economic and military progress of France. The British Government played a most

¹ At the Home Rule Conference in 1873—before Mr. C. S. Parnell had even joined the Home Rule movement—Mr. Butt expressed his views on legitimate and illegitimate obstruction in the following terms: 'Even if they were ready to act on the principle of universal obstruction, that policy ought not to be avowed. The power was one that was lost in the declaration that it would be used. This policy, if it meant anything beyond a menace to a minister, meant that they should obstruct the carrying on of the Queen's government until Home Rule was conceded. Extreme cases might justify a policy of obstruction. If ever they did, the obstruction would probably be carried on in other and more decided ways.' Parnell was to Butt what Cleon was to Pericles.

honourable part in thwarting this abominable design. The dominant feature in the situation at Westminster was undoubtedly supplied by the effect of Mr. Gladstone's attack of acute thelogitis in an article in the *Contemporary Review* and in his pamphlet on *Vaticanism and Civil Allegiance* which had appeared in the autumn of the preceding year. Mr. Gladstone, as I have mentioned already, had been painfully impressed by the hostile action of the Irish hierarchy in procuring 'the fall of his Government and his Irish University Bill early in 1873. He was closely allied in friendship and sentiment with the excommunicated Munich professor, Dr. Döllinger, who was the inspirer of the Bismarckian persecution of the Church in Germany. He was, perhaps, solicitous to alleviate in many English eyes his undoubted tenderness for High Churchism by an outburst of indubitable anti-Popery. Besides, he was a born debater, and as he had sought rest from parliamentary leadership he found a mitigation of the resulting repose in the tilting-yard of polemical disputation. But he completely forfeited in the eyes of Maynooth the good opinions he had gained by his disestablishment and disendowment of the Irish Protestant Church. His attack upon the Church in apparent collusion with the Prussian gendarmes who were dragging bishops and priests to criminal prisons vexed many other persons also.

According to the amiable habit of English party politics, the cooling of love between Hawarden Castle and St. Patrick's College appeared to the Conservative Government a fair occasion for presenting itself as a solace to the deserted and indignant dignitaries of the Irish Catholic community. I gathered from episcopal and archiepiscopal lips appreciative assurances of the charming impressions left by the handsome presence and courtly methods of Sir Michael Hicks-Beach. A heretic, but full of the correctitude of the best circles of the English establishment, he left everywhere behind him among the mitres and soutanes almost a conviction that nothing but the lingering Cromwellianism of English Liberals prevented him from

establishing and endowing right off a most denominational university—

With priests for proctors, Jesuits for deans,
And sweet acolytes who their censers bear.

Perhaps a disorganisation of the Queen's Colleges would be accepted as an instalment by their lordships? The change from Sir Michael to Mr. James Lowther was hardly a change in more than the manner. The Right Hon. Jimmy respected latitudinarianism neither in religion nor politics. The bishops satisfied each English statesman that they liked Home Rule rather less than he did, and Lord Cairns, the pride of Protestant Ulster, struck off the head of the Queen's University. Some of this is anticipatory, but we never had a doubt that the increased, or rather the more visible, animosity of the bishops to the Home Rule movement was favoured at the Vatican itself, and was not unaffected by Mr. Gladstone's pamphleteering as well as by the edifying attitude of the Tory representatives in the devil's half-acre, as Irish Nationalist prejudice has picturesquely entitled the area covered by the Castle of Dublin.

The delicate banter of Mr. Disraeli's argument the previous year against the Irish being a conquered race as a reason for refusing them self-government had totally failed to convince the Irish party that the loss of independence is only a symptom of freedom; and Mr. Butt and his followers entered on the new session with the added resolution of soldiers who had fought their first campaign. Very early in the session an incident occurred in Parliament, which had an immense reverberation in Ireland, and which, significant in relation to Irish affairs in particular, is above all significant as an illustration of the fundamental difficulty in the English government of non-English populations. I refer to the peculiar tactlessness and want of sympathy which the Englishman—especially perhaps the Englishman of the public school and university class—is apt to exhibit in relation to the sentiments, traditions, and characteristics—weaknesses if you will—of other nations, and especially of

nations which have been so favoured by Providence as to fall under the dominion and authority of England. I am not desirous of annoying a single Englishman. As a thorough Nationalist, I honour English nationality in England, and I have never met more thorough good fellows and gallant comrades and high-principled gentlemen than among Englishmen. But the experience of forty years of strenuous life in many lands would be quite useless in writing this book, if I were to flinch from the exposure of facts as I know them. The tactlessness of Englishmen, of men of a high order, is the most difficult of the difficulties of the Empire. In connexion with a matter which will occupy a later chapter, I had the honour of an interview with the Marquis of Salisbury, the late Premier, and I had to complain of certain measures which must militate against the fair chances and rights of Irish candidates at the competitive examinations for the India Civil Service. I was quite unsuccessful in moving Lord Salisbury, who only saw good where I saw something else. I ended my useless appeal in this way :—

You have decided, my Lord, and you are no doubt entirely justified by your convictions of what is best for the British Government of India. Permit me to say this last word and warning. The educated Englishman, the English university man, has many high qualities, but I think, my Lord, that nobody accuses him of over-sympathy with the feelings of other races ; and the day that you will have staffed India from north to south with Oxford and Cambridge men, on that day you will have alienated India for ever.

Lord Salisbury was a straight, high nature, and he took opposition as he gave it. It was a Salisbury Government, a Disraeli Government, full of high-principled Englishmen who committed the contempt—the perfectly wanton contempt and disregard of Irish feeling of which I now speak. Here is how it was. And let me put my whole Irish heart into the telling of it, just as all of us Irish felt in 1875. That will bring us to the bedrock bottom of the national situation as it was in 1875.

There occurred a vacancy in the representation of Tipperary, and while men were thinking or not thinking of the succession to the seat, there came a strange piece of intelligence from New York. Mr. John Mitchell, the fieriest and most gifted editor among the rebel editors of Young Ireland in 1848, had grown an old and infirm man in America, having escaped from the convict settlement in Australia, to which he had been sentenced as a treason-felon after the Black Famine, more than a quarter of a century before. Not a southern Catholic, but an Ulster Unitarian, he had written with a pen of flame indictments of British rule which burn and sear to-day. In his age and extreme infirmity—he was to die within a few weeks—he wrote to Tipperary from New York a message :—

I solicit the high honour of being elected as your representative. I am in favour of Home Rule—that is, the Sovereign Independence of Ireland. I am in favour of the immediate liberation of those prisoners of State whom the English Government keeps in prison as Fenians. Lastly, as well as firstly, I am for Home Rule. The honour of Tipperary will not suffer in my hands.

If Louis Kossuth had sent a voice from exile to Budapest, if Daniel Manin had spoken to the citizens of Venice, there was not an Englishman who would not have understood the position.

Of course, there could be only one response in Ireland—the land which had been swept of hundreds of thousands by death through the quarter-acre clause: in Tipperary—the county which had seen Smith O'Brien muster ‘about thirty rust-eaten fowling-pieces’ against the Government of the clause. John Mitchell was elected without opposition; and when he landed, grey and feeble, in the Cove of Cork, it was to hear himself acclaimed as ‘Member for the Premier County’ by a multitude which seemed to have come from the whole of Munster. Well, it was all very natural. And an election for the Imperial Parliament was not in itself either burglary, blasphemy, or violation of the Sabbath. But here the statesmanlike tact of the British Government steps in.

In the words of the reports of the day, 'the House of Commons at Westminster proceeded without delay to take action in the matter.' What action? The most absurdly offensive that could be imagined, of course. The Conservative whip 'moved for the documents relating to the conviction and escape of John Mitchell.' It was 'the documents relating to the escape,' some twenty years before, of the dying patriot, which were to avenge the affronted majesty of . . . Mrs. Grundy. Mark the legal beauty of the reasoning, while you are admiring the generosity and tact. John Mitchell had been sentenced to fourteen years' transportation as common felon for his pronounced dislike—after seeing 1,000,000 famine deaths in twelve months—of British rule in Ireland. He had escaped 'before the expiry of his sentence.' Therefore he was still 'an escaped convict'—he, the author of 'Mitchell's History of Ireland,' and 'The Last Conquest of Ireland—Perhaps,' and 'Leaves from a Jail Journal,' containing some of the best prose of the century; John Mitchell, the unanimously elected M.P. for Tipperary. What incarcerated patriot would not escape from Austrian, or Neapolitan, or Russian imprisonment? How often had the *Times* invited such to the hospitality of freedom-loving England? So Mr. Disraeli, after being fortified by his law-officers, and 'the documents,' proceeded to move, on Thursday, February 18, 1875: 'That John Mitchell, having been adjudged guilty of treason-felony and sentenced to transportation for fourteen years, and not having endured the full term of his sentence, nor having received legal pardon under the Great Seal, has become and continues to be incapable to sit in Parliament.' Mitchell's offence, by the way, had been pure journalese. He had not even handled one of 'the thirty rust-eaten fowling-pieces.' His fourteen years were for being a rebel editor. And in 1875 already that was twenty-seven years ago!

To their credit the leaders of the Liberal party disassociated themselves, though with overmuch regard for officialism, from the technical crudities which his advisers

had placed in the fine and discerning mouth of the Premier-satirist. Where was the scrutinising and caustic spirit that day? Alas, the Tory chief was now as affectedly gorgeous as one of the most magnificent waistcoats of his dandy youth! Sir Henry James, still a dozen years from being a Unionist seceder, fired a brace of posers into the Treasury bench. Did the Government intend to send Mr. Mitchell to work out his original sentence? Would they proceed against the escaped convict for prison breaking? A fierce laugh broke from the Irish ranks. No, admitted the Attorney-General, they could do neither. But he stuck to it, that once a felon, always a felon, if you have escaped; at least so far as concerned sitting in that House. Would the Attorney-General cite the provision? 'It was not a provision; it was a deduction.' Sir William Harcourt gravely opined that such a new view should be submitted to a special committee. Mr. Robert Lowe also held that the 'deduction' required a committee. Lord Hartington and Mr. Forster both supported reference to a committee. The adjournment of the debate was supported by 102 votes against 269 on the side of the Government, Mrs. Grundy, and 'the outraged principles of the House of Commons.' Yes, according to Hansard, the intelligent Premier, with dignified deportment, declared literally, in these words:—

That it was part of his duty, if a felon was returned to Parliament, and comes to this table, and claims to be a representative of the people, so long as he, Mr. Disraeli, was sitting in that place, it was part of his duty to call upon the House of Commons to avenge its outraged principles, and to say, 'Until, either by the favour of the Crown or your own dutiful conduct, you shall have cleared yourself from this flaw, you shall not take your seat in the House of Commons.'

'Dutiful conduct' is good. 'Flaw' is distinctly good. But oh, the abysmal bathos of it all! And the tact, the generous, statesmanlike tact!

The picture of this Imperial champion of Imperial select society—for the purpose of rubbing into the Irish members and nation at large that their dying patriot was

only a common, low convict and outcast—proceeding to that histrionico-ludicrous allocution to a supposititious Mr. William Sykes !—

Before you shall sit in these exclusive circles, before you shall be accepted as the peer of Honourable Members, you must have cleared yourself of your flaw—ahem—either by the favour of the Crown, or by your own dutiful conduct—ahem—in picking your prescribed quantity of oakum, &c. Do this, and you are our honoured colleague. Otherwise, if, for instance, you happened to be an escaped rebel editor, you would outrage the principles of the House of Commons.

The surgical operation which Sydney Smith, inveraciously and of malice aforethought, declared to be requisite for Scotsmen, would clearly not be superfluous for Mr. Disraeli and his House of Commons. Every Irishman knew and resented to the extremest bitterness the meaning of it all. It was to brand Irish insurrection against Acts of Union, quarter-acre clauses, &c., with the brand of low, common felony ; to set and keep the Irish rebel in the same sink and gutter with the sneak-thief and footpad, the wife-beater, the defiler of children. Of course, when a nation rises against wrong, the forfeit of failure is death. You play the stake for freedom or the gibbet. But to take a captive insurgent from the lost field, to manacle the insurgent writer at his desk, and then to fling him into the common sewer of chained and branded thievery and murderdom ; nay, also, to shout at the very face of the land and folk for whom he suffered : ‘ See, your hero is a common, dirty, lousy scoundrel and felon, emptying slops for other felons, getting the warder’s whip on his back like other felons.’ This, this was the culmination and apotheosis of a claim to be a governing race and country !

The disqualification of John Mitchell, and the manner of it, opened all the old wounds. It half undid Butt’s conciliatory programme of Imperial partnership along with national legislation. Perhaps it undid it altogether. The ‘ felon ’ taunt to the dying man worked far and near. I found the echo and the smart in every quarter, in every

meeting of the Home Rule Confederation, in every meeting everywhere.

Within a fortnight after these painful and provocative scenes, the Disraeli Government introduced a Coercion Renewal Bill for Ireland. It must be admitted that it had chosen no lenitive or soothing preliminary for this fresh encroachment on the patience of the Irish people. Yet the renewed proposals contained two significant alleviations of the arbitrary code. The Lord-Lieutenant was no longer to be empowered to suppress summarily, without trial or verdict, any Irish newspaper which he considered seditious, nor were the police to arrest Irish men or women for the offence of being outside of their houses after sundown! The concessions are a sufficient indication of the nature of Government-by-Act-of-Union in Ireland in 1875. As I have already mentioned the introduction of obstruction by Mr. Butt and Mr. Sullivan in opposition to this penal legislation, and as I cannot purpose to transcribe the able, determined, and eloquent appeals to justice, equity, and expediency which the Irish leaders made in vain to the House, I shall shortly pass to later events. Two matters, however, deserve special notice. The first will be found to be exceedingly important in determining the class of crime which shortly rose to such heights of outrage in Ireland, notwithstanding, or in consequence of, the Government's preference for coercion instead of self-government. It is the repeated statement by Sir Michael Hicks-Beach and Lord Hartington both, as representing the present and the recent ministries, that there was a large and dangerous amount of disposition to agrarian crime smouldering in the country, and that the Ribbon conspiracy, which had been for generations the source and instrument of outrage of every kind, was still a power among the rural populations. The other matter is the prominent and determined part played by the members of the party, whom Parnellism was afterwards to deride as the moderate Home Rulers, in the open and relentless hostility to renewed coercion. It was Lord Robert Montague, P.C., son of a Duke of

Manchester, Home Rule member for Westmeath, who moved the amendment against the second reading. Mr. O'Connor Don, member for Roscommon, added his protest, with special condemnation of searches for arms, and the indiscriminating fines upon all the inhabitants of a district in which an outrage had occurred. No more weighty protest was uttered than that of Mr. H. Owen Lewis, a deputy-lieutenant for the County Monaghan, Home Rule member for Carlow Borough. He was forced, of course, out of Irish politics by the Davitt-Parnell Jacobinism. Now he gave the weight of his position and high character to an emphatic declaration that the coercion system in Ireland was contrary to the Constitution, and productive of disorder rather than peace. 'You are making of Ireland,' said Mr. Owen Lewis, 'another France before the Revolution. Kilmainham Jail is your bastille. Lord-Lieutenant's warrants are your *lettres de cachet*.' Judging by the mere consideration of expediency, such a protest came with more weight from a deputy-lieutenant of Monaghan than from some item of the Land League, paid weekly from Mr. Patrick Ford's exchequer. Mr. Butt's party used even obstruction with discernment, and indignant eloquence with dignity, long before Mr. C. S. Parnell had been elected by any Irish constituency whatever. 'But Mr. Parnell succeeded.' Did he? Where is the Irish Parliament? Where is the Irish population? Another million and a quarter have disappeared since the Land League began. And the loss is not only absolute, but relative. In 1875 Ireland was still one-sixth of the United Kingdoms. To-day she is less than one-tenth. Raise ye, then, his statue beside O'Connell, who did *not* get repeal, and who *dis*-franchised seven-eighths of the Irish electorate.

There is one feature of every official statement, which repeats itself with instructive monotony on every introduction of every Coercion Bill which has ever been proposed, and, I suppose, which will ever be proposed for the ostensible purpose of terminating agrarian crime in Ireland. This feature is the highest possible eulogium on the Irish police

coupled with the lowest possible estimate of their success in the detection and punishment of agrarian offences. If the captures of Irish criminals bore anything like a just proportion to the military and social virtues of the police, it would be simply impossible to find an agrarian criminal in the entire country. Unfortunately, we have the two phenomena side by side : the finest constabulary, like the finest peasantry, on earth ; and the biggest show of non-arrests and non-convictions which can be found anywhere, except in the pages of the last official report upon the subject the preceding year, or the year before that. Has it ever occurred to the powers which control Ireland's administration that military virtues are by no means the leading characteristic of a detective police ? See the Royal Irish Constabulary on patrol or on the march. Heads up, backs straight, chests expanded, feet turned out ; with bayonet at side, or with rifle in hand ; there is only a difference of uniform between them and their brethren the Irish Guards at Chelsea Barracks. Imagine a squad of the Grenadiers or the Coldstreams malefactor-hunting ! The 12,000 semi-soldiers of the Royal Irish Constabulary are an efficient garrison. They might be a mobile field force against undisciplined insurgents, where the country was not very difficult. But imagine them stealing up, with their martial stride, to surprise a lodge of Ribbonmen in the corner of a wood, or tracking unperceived, in full military trim, big, and square, and burly, the suspected emissaries of Captain Moonlight through field and lane and lonely hamlet. In the comic opera of *Les Brigands* there is a similar force of stately Carabiniers, and every brigand in the play can ' hear the tramp of the Carabiniers ' while the preservers of the peace are a mile off. There are aspects in which the magnificent array of the Royal Irish Constabulary might remind Captain Moonlight, if that gentleman knows his Paris, of the pseudo-thieftakers of *Opéra Bouffe*. Undoubtedly they are unsurpassed as a recruiting-nursery for the regiment of Irish Guards at Chelsea Barracks. The British Government of Ireland regard the Royal Irish Constabulary as

their special stroke of genius. As for the *Times*, which is the London *Moniteur* of the Napoleons of Upper Castle Yard, its views can be always summarised in two words: 'they are so loyal and such fine men.' The Park nursery-maids would not say otherwise.

There is a specific defect of semi-soldiers in the handling of riots and rioters to which I shall now call attention in connexion with the stormy scenes which are ahead in Ireland. I refer to the readiness alleged against the Irish constabulary to use their firearms on provocation which no London constable would consider deserving of anything more serious than a blow from the shoulder or a tap of a truncheon. The case of police-firing at Mitchells-town, which occurred under a Salisbury Ministry and the Chief Secretaryship of Mr. A. J. Balfour, and which enlisted the indignant eloquence of Mr. Gladstone, was one of the most noted instances of the kind. I think that it was established that the constabulary, inflamed by street fighting with a rough element, rushed to their barracks, armed themselves with their rifles, and replied with bullets to their opponents. What I maintained years before this sad occurrence, what obtained the warm approval of Mr. R. H. Hutton in the *Spectator*—one of the keenest as well as the justest of men—was the view, that in no circumstances should police act as soldiers as well as police in the quelling of a riot, except under extraordinary pressure indeed. When you have the police and the soldiers, and when the soldiers come openly to replace the police, overborne and menaced, then that very fact gives an unmistakable warning to the mob. The redcoat and rifle mean death in case of resistance. The line of distinction from police operations is broad and clear. If the mob gets shot, the mob cannot complain. But, when the same men as police, being worsted with fist and stick, run in hot blood and smarting anger to the military weapon, and fire on the rioters whom they were just striking and pushing, there is immense danger that hot blood and aroused passions may produce inconsiderate and unconsidered results.

The punishment of death—for that is what firing on a crowd implies—should only be inflicted by cool and calm executioners of order and law, whose very uniform is a warning that the ultimate argument of Government is about to be employed. An angry mob in Ireland can often hardly tell when the semi-military policemen are going to act as constables or as soldiers. The two forms of authority should be distinct.

The loyal virtues of a Royal Irish Constabulary who were never able to catch transgressors of the law, together with the infallibility of their reports upon the state of the country, had really formed the only grounds on which the Government was demanding a continuation of exceptional repression for Ireland. Mr. Disraeli, in addition, used that other stock assurance of all Union administrators in Dublin Castle: 'Honourable Members might be certain that not one innocent man had anything to fear from the exceptional powers demanded by the Crown.' The member for Louth, Mr. A. M. Sullivan, poured an eloquent torrent of indignation, cool analysis, and biting ridicule upon the whole of these trumpery commonplaces of irresponsible authority, which formed one of the finest pieces of argument and restrained invective heard in Parliament. Why did not the Government produce the documents which he alleged to be so full of proofs? If innocence and inoffensiveness had nothing to fear from this invaluable legislation, why was England excluded from a model code, in which Irishmen certainly desired no monopoly of benefit? What of the guarantee of equal laws under the impartial and equitable Act of Union? So long as a single statute existed which branded Ireland with exceptional repression, so long would the Irish members make conciliation their mockery and resentment their duty.

One portion of Mr. Sullivan's splendid address was devoted to that same topic of the alleged imminence of criminal outbreaks and alleged prevalence of criminal organisation to which I have referred, and which forms a matter of the utmost importance to the historical critic as

well, especially in view of the subsequent theories of a section of English opinion that agrarian crime merely came from the Land League. When we remember that the Land League began in 1879, and that Sir Michael Hicks-Beach as Chief Secretary was picturing this alarming prevalence of agrarian crime only four years before, it is at least probable that agrarian crime corrupted the Land League quite as much as the Land League created crime.

What was the excuse (asked Mr. Sullivan) for renewing these statutes against Ireland? The Minister declared that secret crime was waiting to burst upon the country. Where were the proofs? The Minister averred that horrible things were happening behind a veil, and that murder throughout the land was only waiting to pervade the country the moment that Coercion was repealed, and that if the authorities were not armed with these means of repression, assassination and outrage would rage in Ireland during the coming winter.

The coming winter brought us into the beginning of 1876, and the probability becomes a certainty, on the evidence of the Government, that any evil-minded members of the Land League could find the organisation of outrage not waiting to be created, but waiting to be employed. 'Assist us,' cried Mr. Disraeli with tears in his voice, 'to prevent unlawful oaths and threatening letters.' In replying to Mr. Disraeli the Home Rule premier, Mr. Butt, was able to play him a cruel turn with his own words in a Guildhall speech.

The Conservative Premier had lately reminded the people of England that the marked diminution of every kind of crime and outrage in England since the opening of the century was undoubtedly due to the improved methods of government, to the greater humanity of legislation, and the larger sympathies and broader equity which inspired the administration of justice. The right hon. gentleman's words had been enthusiastically cheered by the Lord Mayor's guests. How is it that he has not thought that those great improvements in the spirit and matter of legislation would produce corresponding tranquillity in other countries as well? Assuredly the condition of England might be far less peaceful if the Algerine Acts still held down

public opinion and action, if domiciliary visits, dictatorial government, and irresponsible police rule still prevailed in the English shires as in the counties of Ireland.

Continuous consideration of English opinion by a native administration, continuous disregard of Irish opinion by an alien administration ; might not this imply all the difference between content and discontent with their different consequences ? Mr. Disraeli required all his habits of unruffled calm to meet Mr. Butt's repartee.

While the Home Rule members by argument and legitimate obstruction were combating the progress of the Coercion Bill, there occurred the event which was to add Mr. C. S. Parnell to the ranks of the Irish Parliamentarians. Mr. John Martin, M.P. for County Meath, died March 29 from bronchitis, caught while travelling to attend the funeral of Mr. John Mitchell, the disqualified M.P. for Tipperary, who had died on the 21st of the same month. Mr. Martin had shared both the political struggle of 1848 and the penal condemnation of Mr. Mitchell, whose sister he had married. He had felt deeply the insults heaped upon his friend and relative, as well as upon the Young Ireland memories. A Presbyterian, and a student of Trinity College, Dublin, he was distinguished by an ardent patriotism united with personal gentleness and courtesy which won him general affection. I was honoured by his most friendly notice, and nobody more than he expressed wrath and contempt at the foul judgment which had deprived me of my lawful seat for Galway. The first I knew of Honest John Martin's death in Ireland was by receiving a message from Mr. Butt to come and see him without delay. The Home Rule leader at once told me the most regrettable news, and at once added : ' You know, Mr. O'Donnell, the party has always treated you as the rightful M.P. for Galway, and you are privileged to attend our party dinners and meetings as such. You have great claims on us for the injustice done you. If the succession to John Martin were offered to you, would you contest Meath ? ' I replied without hesitation, that I could not do anything of the kind at present, as I was

thoroughly crippled in the pecuniary sense by the contested election at Galway and the expenses of the election petition on top of all. 'I thought it would be so,' Butt replied. 'I hear Sir Charles Gavan Duffy is mentioned, and there is young Parnell, who also fought an election for Home Rule. I dare say that something which will suit you when you are ready will be found for you. I wished to consult you to avoid misunderstanding.'

It was too true. I was not rich enough, and it would be a couple of years before I could hope to cover the losses inflicted on me by the selected judge. Meantime things were happening in Meath which very nearly shut out Mr. Parnell for the second time. There can be no doubt that a powerful section of the Catholic clergy, not content with abstention from Home Rule—which was perfectly legitimate in members of their sacred profession vowed to unworldly aims—were casting about for means to revive the previous state of Irish politics, when the bishops had practically succeeded to that disposal of Government patronage which was enjoyed by O'Connell. To restore the prestige of O'Connellism, and to fight Home Rule with Repeal, formed an obvious sort of strategy. A large body of the most influential clergy in the diocese of Meath conceived the idea of raising Sir Charles Gavan Duffy as a rival to Isaac Butt. Gavan Duffy had been, like Mitchell and Martin, a Young Irelander, but had found more favourable jurors for lighter charges. After some years in the London Parliament, he had retired to Australia, risen to a front rank as a colonial statesman, and received knighthood. Gavan Duffy was too blunt for his clerical patrons. He declared his hostility to Home Rule in no mincing phrase. The country was not prepared for an open breach with the policy which it had just sanctioned at the Conference and at the polls. Gavan Duffy was informed that his case was hopeless. The field was open for the follower of Butt, the young Charles Stewart Parnell. At the same time, the militant feelings, excited by the insults to Irish nationality recently flung in the House of Commons, were powerfully attracted

to the Home Rule candidate by the fact that he had hastened to support the candidature of John Mitchell by his personal adhesion and a cheque for £25. The total failure of the repeal intrigue made his return a certainty. A Tory and an independent Home Ruler, discountenanced by Butt, forced an election contest. Parnell was chosen by a large majority, and took his seat in Parliament three weeks after the death of Mr. John Martin. He was at the time very much the same slight, handsome, delicate-looking young man who had congratulated me on my election for Galway a year before. He was an attentive follower of the Home Rule party in all its votes. Practically he never spoke, and had no pronounced opinions. He was just a good Nationalist like Mr. Sullivan or Mr. O'Connor Power, without the eloquence of either, or the varied experience of Sullivan. For a session and a half he was almost unknown.¹ All the stories about his appearance having caused a revolution in the party are mere appendages of later legend, born of fancy, or disseminated by system. When I introduced him to the London Executive of the Home Rule Confederation in 1876—I being then vice-president under Butt the president—his titles to an enthusiastic reception were that he was, on the father's side, the great-grandson of Sir Henry Parnell, who had been Chancellor of the Exchequer in the Irish Parliament and opposed the Union, and, on the mother's side, the grandson of Admiral Stewart of the American navy, who had won victories for the young Republic against the warships of England. But I had my reasons for knowing that there was a great deal more than good descent about this silent member. Towards the end of 1876 I became honorary secretary of the Confederation as well as vice-president, a position which gave me the

¹ In the super-eulogistic *Life of Charles Stewart Parnell* by Mr. R. Barry O'Brien it is admitted that Parnell's presence was quite unnoticed for the first two sessions of his appearance in Parliament. 'Up to the end of 1876 he continued undistinguished and almost unnoticed. He had not, so to speak, drawn out of the ruck' (vol. i, p. 98). But it is unjust to harp on Parnell's silence. He soon learned to speak thoroughly well, and he knew the full importance of having Irish members in that House who could speak not only well but splendidly.

chief organising authority throughout the whole of the branches in Great Britain, and enabled me to exercise a very extensive influence. I got Parnell chosen as chairman of an immense amnesty procession and meeting which the Irish of the London district held in Hyde Park. In a few months afterwards I had returned to the House of Commons, and under the auspices of Biggar, O'Donnell, and Parnell—to name the comrades in alphabetical order—the new policy became a power. The silent Parnell had become, among other things, a clear, effective, and inexhaustible debater.

It was perhaps necessary to mention the partial anticipation of events contained in the foregoing paragraph. To return to the Irish Parliamentary party, which for a couple of sessions was to know little about its recruit in the representation of Meath, the policy of vigorous hostility to the Disraeli administration, and vigorous presentation of Irish grievances, continued to be pressed with resolution and pertinacity. The circumstances were in some respects distinctly unpropitious. It must be admitted that in outward seeming the opening years of the Cabinet of the brilliant, the dazzling, the meteoric Disraeli were phenomenally commonplace. If there had not been a few bad scandals on the Stock Exchange which drifted into parliamentary notice, if an Indian prince had not been accused of trying to poison his English resident or official overseer, if some Congo negroes had not been shelled by some bluejackets, and if one of her Majesty's ships had not sent another to the bottom, there would hardly have been an excuse for a headline in the papers—at least as regards British affairs. It seemed as if fate had unkindly refused to give Mr. Disraeli's ministers the smallest opportunity to shine. But for the Home Rulers, and pending the arrival of that greater obstruction which still lay behind the veils of the future, the business of Parliament might almost be summed up in the words, 'No business done.' The great commoner of the nineteenth century, Mr. Gladstone, had chosen his time not ill for turning to theological disquisition

and invective. He was missing very little by his novel excursions and alarms, and he may have been enjoying some pungent sensations. It seemed also that the majority of the members of the Cabinet were quite up to the level of the general uninterestingness. The Hibernian cavillers at the lack of world-shaking events in Mr. Butt's policy are probably unaware that the assembled wisdom of Great Britain fared not more heroically. When the wise and witty Sir William Harcourt addressed his Oxford constituents after the session, he was able to observe to them, with delightful veracity: 'Gentlemen, if the old saying be true that happy is the nation whose annals are dull, I may congratulate you at this Christmastide on being citizens of the most fortunate kingdom in the world.'

The incorrigible Mr. Sullivan at least contrived to give the Government several agitated moments; and though the dull ponderosity of the ministerial majorities destroyed the legislative chance of every Irish reform, the speeches—eloquent, fierce, searching, cruelly analytic of Union incapacity—acted with increasing force, every month that passed, as an education of Ireland both on the obtuse incapacity and inequity of the droning Government at Westminster and on the need of further measures to supplement the protest of eloquent patriotism. There never was the slightest ground for supplanting the policy of Butt. It only required to be completed by additional methods of peaceful or vivid persuasion and retaliation. But there always have been little and selfishly mean people in most countries who take the imperfections of a great scheme of policy not as a call and encouragement for correction and improvement, but as an excuse for additional damage and idiotic demolition.

One of Mr. Sullivan's touches of enlivening vigour was at the expense of an unhappy English member, who, in the heat of a constituency dinner, wandered into the foolishness of calling the Home Rule party 'disreputable.' Considering the plethora of big landlords, brothers and sons of peers, deputy-lieutenants, and similar ornaments of

Debrett who adorned our ranks before the coming of Mr. Patrick Ford's stipendiaries ; not to mention the more important array of brilliant lawyers, newspaper owners and writers, bankers, merchants, and other professional men of note ; it would have been as silly almost to apply the term to the Carlton Club. I have no intention of mentioning the peccant member's name. He was really a good fellow, and told several in private that he had made a bit of an ass of himself, besides apologising in the House. Mr. Sullivan's action was thoroughly right and spirited, however. So also was the courtly and gay apologia of the Premier for his countryman, which resolved itself into an amusing exposition of the embarrassment of a member of Parliament on tour, who is expected to abuse the opposite party and finds his adjectives insensibly taking control of themselves. With a magnificent air of supreme surprise at the growing tendency to use strong language, Mr. Disraeli suggested that a word of real regret was due and might be accepted. Some of us remembered hearing of a young gentleman bearing quite the name of the Premier who had conversed with Mr. O'Connell on terms not altogether unequal to the competition ; but that did not prevent Mr. Sullivan, having effected his purpose, from accepting the reparation of the repentant offender.

But the member for Louth did far more important service in striking the first effectual blow at the absurd rule which allowed any individual member to exclude the press or any other ' strangers ' by simply ' espying ' their presence in the gallery. Irish grievances, depending on the support of public opinion in most cases far more than upon ministerial or opposition sympathies, had most to lose by this perpetual menace in the hand of every bigot or fanatic who might wish to blanket the exposure of an iniquity or the vindication of a right. The occasion was afforded by a Conservative member who made an awkward and baseless attack upon publications, asserted to reflect upon a member, appearing in the *Times* and *Daily News*—though at least one of these journals was a conspicuous unfriend to Ireland ; perhaps this

circumstance appeared an additional advantage in the case. The printers and publishers had been threatened with the bar of the House, when Mr. Sullivan boldly intervened with a demand for the abolition of all the worn-out restrictions upon the people's right to have full knowledge of the doings of the people's legislative trustees. Raising the controversy far above the restricted importance of the original incident, Mr. Sullivan pleaded for the definite relief of the public press 'from all the hazards and menaces under which it was now obliged to discharge its useful and indispensable functions on behalf of the House and on behalf of the country.' Mr. Sullivan, himself a journalist and newspaper owner, was entitled to speak of worse hazards than expulsion from the gallery or appearance at the bar. His two weekly papers, the *Weekly News* and the *Nation*—the latter a real organ of education and national culture—had often borne the brunt of the worst angers of the devil's half-acre for nearly a quarter of a century. The effect of his intervention now was instantaneous. No less a personage than the new leader of the Opposition—since the unresting retirement of Mr. Gladstone—the Marquis of Hartington, adopted the contentions of the member for Louth, and proposed at once to make the removal of strangers dependent on the vote of the House itself instead of the bias or petulance of an individual. Practically speaking, the demand of the Opposition leader was accepted by Mr. Disraeli, and the result holds good to this day. It was in connexion with this struggle—which, as I have said, was vital to the spokesmen of Ireland's wrongs—that Mr. Biggar, aggravating similar action by Mr. Sullivan, found and applied a crucial proof of the necessity of the reform so urgently required by the Irish party. A most distinguished and illustrious group of strangers, including the Heir Apparent, entered the gallery to hear a debate on the promotion of horse culture by a member, Mr. Chaplin, understood to excel in that branch of knowledge. The indomitable member for Cavan secured at once the eternal wrath of the *Court Circular* and the passage of the requisite reform by 'espionage' an illustrious

personage on whom most eyes were turned. Of course, the Standing Orders were hastily suspended and the Prince of Wales lost nothing of Mr. Chaplin's philippic. But the 'espial of strangers' was mortally wounded, and speedily gave up the ghost. There was absolutely no wanton rudeness in Mr. Biggar's intention. 'The report of Irish grievances must not be smothered.' The removal of the evil might still have been debated Heaven knew how long. Mr. Biggar emancipated the press of three kingdoms in three minutes. He drove home the nail planted by his colleague of Louth. To this day the *Times* and its influential congeners, whom Biggar and Sullivan liberated from ridiculous caprice, only speak of the incident as a crowning illustration of the implike and aimless mischief of Irish Hobstruction. I was told by no less authoritative a witness than Mr. Montague Corry that his Royal Highness very quickly ascertained the real target of Mr. Biggar's manœuvre, and knew that it was not the royal dignity or convenience.

In everything which was done in Parliament by Mr. A. M. Sullivan we see the same purpose to combine an immediate object with a general scope and effect. I know his views, because I was intimate with him from the first hour of my participation in any kind of political work whatever. He had urged me to attend the Home Rule Conference in 1873 when the consciousness of my youth and inexperience of Dublin politicians would have kept me away. He stood to me all through the crisis of the foul judgment against my Galway election. He shared entirely my conviction that Irish patriotism should combine itself with as many good causes and righteous demands as possible, in order to oppose a mighty confederation of the wronged against the leagued iniquities which oppressed us all. When the subsidised competition of the organ of dissension and exasperation, called the *United Irishman*, destroyed the circulation and money-value of his honourable newspapers, he was like a man hamstrung. He determined to do what he could for Ireland under any circumstances. He was

more sanguine than I ; because, though my senior by many years, his experience outside Ireland was very restricted, and he fancied that ' the Land League would ' yet cure itself.' Besides, he had taken up the great advocacy of temperance, and, while he tolerated the Land League, he worked for the United Kingdom Alliance. Besides, too, he hardly lived to see the worst consequences of the bastard Tammany which had been founded by Mr. Patrick Ford's dollars and fortified by silencing minds and intimidating actions. It is certain that he could even obstruct, and in the manner which cannot be detected though it may be suspected. But the detection of obstruction became far more necessary than the obstruction itself to the future band around Parnell ; because open detection, notoriety, the glare and heat and noise of suspensions and expulsions, were so many invaluable self-advertisements to impress the gaping leaguers of the homeland and the generous helps of Irish America. This latter fact, which is the key of much, will be fully understood after a later chapter.

The identification of Irish sympathies with the great movement of popular indignation in England, which had been aroused by the veritable apostolate of Mr. Plimsoll on behalf of the merchant seamen, was another achievement of Mr. A. M. Sullivan. Few men ever forgot, who knew what occurred when the Sailor's Friend, exasperated beyond self-control by the refusal of the Government to promote a Bill protecting the crew from the coffin ship, rushed to the very table of the House, and with passionate gestures denounced the ' ring of murderers ' who were drowning men to gain insurance policies. Accumulating epithets of infamy on the men he named, Mr. Plimsoll stood, refusing to obey all requests of the chair to withdraw his language. There was no alternative for the leader of the House, seconded by the leader of the Opposition, but to move a censure on the popular offender. It was then that Mr. A. M. Sullivan arose, and in a few sentences of restrained feeling reminded the House of what Mr. Plimsoll must suffer at a delay in remedial legislation which might mean death to

hundreds of poor seafarers, and pleaded for time for his friend to recover the command of his emotion. The Parliament of England owned the power of talent and rectitude embodied in that grey, slight Irishman, with the thin, strong face of the men who lead, as well as profess, the higher life. His plea was granted. His action announced that 'Ireland backed Plimsoll.' Years afterwards, at a vast demonstration of English advocates of temperance, where Alexander Martin Sullivan was speaking, somebody—everybody—called for a cheer for 'Sullivan and Plimsoll's Mark.' Often, in addressing—as representative of the Home Rule Confederation—popular meetings in Liverpool, Hull, Grimsby, Newcastle, Dundee, Glasgow, where the seafaring folk abound, I found that Mr. Sullivan's service to Plimsoll and the sailors was a big recommendation of Home Rule to British working-men.

The Irish Parliamentary party went on relating Irish grievances, proposing remedial measures, moving Irish Bills for Irish domestic objects, raising also the Home Rule demand in set and formal fashion in full-dress debate. The party-splitters and nation-splitters who substituted a Jacobin agrarianism for the restoration of the Parliament, have never tired of expatiating on the futility of motions which were always rejected by overwhelming majorities. If they had not been futile, if Irish interests could really be aided and promoted by Unionist majorities, it would have been said that we were trying to prove that Ireland could be governed in an Irish spirit by a London legislature! Our futile motions were a double education. They educated many Englishmen to an understanding of the want of a home Parliament. They educated millions of Irishmen, on both sides of the Atlantic, to a need for wider action and completer organisation, but not for dissension and ingratitude. Butt could have had a successor, but his supersession was base.

While the Irish party under Butt were spending this session of 1875 in continuous activity—retaliatory, constructive, propagandist—a sleepless opponent was organising

an attack which wanted neither ingenuity nor determination. It was the centenary of the birth of O'Connell. In the coming month of August the birthday would fall. Ireland was full of O'Connellites, as became a country which is kept steadily and persistently far, far from knowing the facts of its own history, even in the most recent times. The great figure of the agitator loomed almost as large in the minds of multitudes as on his mountainous monument of Sackville Street. What a significant word that 'agitator' is, and how admirably it suits both the hero and the people ! Not to progress, not to combat, not to conquer, not to have and to hold ; but to agitate ! ' Sure it is a great agitation we are having.' And certainly a great agitator was the famous advocate—so full of words, so empty of deeds. But to a million of simple, affectionate, agitation-loving people, and to some thousands of earnest and enthusiastic clergymen, he was, and always would be, ' the Giant ' whom Bulwer Lytton saw, and a giant who was only prevented by envious pygmies from adding repeal to the triumph of emancipation.

It seemed not difficult to build upon these bases a rival power which would make a brief ending for that Home Rule, which somehow had stolen a march upon the guardians of the country. A cult of O'Connellism was set up in every parish in Ireland. The imaginary greatness of the past was contrasted with the ineffectiveness and failure of to-day. Nobody spoke, because nobody knew, of anything but monster meetings which had made England tremble and superhuman virtues which had won papal benedictions. All the popular heroes rolled into one went to the making of the Daniel O'Connell who was to be the centre of a mighty festival of commemoration and glorification in the streets and halls and churches of Dublin on the coming of August 6. The Home Rulers accepted it all quietly, assisted it all enthusiastically. Of course, the Irish premier, the leader of the party and the League, the great advocate of amnesty and self-government, would be the representative of Ireland and the speaker of the commemoration

address. Not a bit of it! The panegyric was to be ecclesiastical. An archbishop was to deliver it in the chief church of Dublin. The outdoor demonstration was to be headed by a perfectly inoffensive and devout little man, who was a large draper in Sackville Street, who was called Peter Paul MacSweeney, and who happened, or who had been contrived, to be Lord Mayor for the year. Was all that to be tolerated?

Friends in the enemy's camp gave us timely warning of the nature and extent of the plot. Butt was to be entirely excluded from the great demonstration in Sackville Street. A platform, like a tower or fort, was to be constructed with parapets all round, like a breastwork, and with a single entrance by a narrow door. To this castle a select party of pious Whigs or moderate—very moderate—Liberals were to be escorted, and under the chairmanship of Mr. Peter Paul MacSweeney were to address the meeting on O'Connell and Repeal and Emancipation. A lay leader had been found to act as marshal-organiser of the demonstration; and this was Mr. P. J. Smythe, M.P., a repealer who had accepted Home Rule, and who was now a repealer all over again. He was a speaker of rarely beautiful diction, and I think that he was justly entitled to a higher place in Mr. Butt's party than had been accorded to him. He was to be supported in his exercise of his function as marshal by the Dublin Quay porters, who had been recruited as the living representatives of the riverside labourers who formed O'Connell's bodyguard. When Ireland saw that the Home Rule leader had not been asked even to appear on the platform of the meeting, it would be all over with his prestige and influence. To us, who understood what was behind the whole business, the affair seemed repulsively reckless and unconscionable.

Fortunately we had three organisations which had the masses at their back. They were the Home Rule League in Ireland, the Home Rule Confederation, which embraced most of the Irishmen in Great Britain, and the Amnesty Association, which, formed to urge the release of the Fenian

prisoners, included all the most trustworthy men of the militant Nationalist party in the three kingdoms. The Home Rule Confederation, being located outside of Ireland, was most strongly organised for speedy intervention in every kind of emergency. It was decided that these three organisations should co-operate: (1) to mass a vast body of sympathisers, (2) to drive off the bodyguard at all costs, (3) to occupy the embattled platform in Sackville Street, and (4) to substitute Mr. Butt, our leader, for anybody—from a city draper to a legal dignitary—who might attempt to occupy what was going to be *our* platform for *our* leader and his supporters.

‘What are the Chiefs to do?’

Says the Shan Van Vocht.

‘What are the Chiefs to do?’

Says the Shan Van Vocht.

‘What should the Chieftains do,

But give the robber crew

A touch of Brian Boru?’

Says the Shan Van Vocht.

Mr. Peter Paul MacSweeney was to get a touch of peaceful persuasion to retire to the dignified repose of Lord Mayor. I was in the thick of the affair. I recognised that a very shabby and injurious plot had been prepared against the free choice of the Irish constituencies, and I was of opinion that the whole existence of the new party might be at issue.

The Home Rule Confederation sent from England 6000 members, mainly from the great towns of Lancashire, Yorkshire, Durham, and the neighbourhood of Glasgow and Glasgow itself. It was resolved that the Amnesty Association should be the centre of direction, and the amnesty flag, mounted on a high and strong car—adapted, as I remember, from a large float—was to head our procession. At least twice the number of confederates came from Dublin and from other seats of militant Nationalism, South Munster being strongly represented. I had resolved to see the matter through without any hanging back, and

I took a place on the amnesty car itself. I could see everything there. It was my first reappearance in Ireland since I had been cheated out of my Galway seat, and I found myself popular in consequence of that injustice. All Ireland seemed to have come to Dublin. The clergy were everywhere, many being good friends of Home Rule. The four archbishops, twenty bishops, and five hundred priests had taken part in the religious ceremonial within the pro-Cathedral, where the 'memory' of the deceased gentleman—who did not repeal the Union, and who did introduce forty Catholic place-hunters into the Parliament at London—was belauded amid benedictions and confraternity banners, as if he had been Joan of Arc. The crowd was full of anxiety to know where was Butt? Whispers were flying to all sorts of purposes. The great amnesty procession of many thousands of determined men pressed on rapidly to secure its intended place in the monster demonstration, but the plotters had provided against that as well. A great force of coal-porters, headed by mounted men, and led by Marshal P. J. Smythe, M.P., in person, charged down upon our progress, and the traces of the amnesty car were cut. But the confederates and amnesty men were not the stuff to be balked by the bodyguard. The marshal and his guardsmen were driven off very quickly. A hundred pairs of strong arms pushed and tugged the amnesty car right up to the embastioned platform, on which a select party of the enemy was already assembled. As I stood beside the flag on the car, I could see the stern columns of our contingents converging to their appointed stations. In twenty seconds the high ramparts of the platform, raised against the possibility of a rush, were surmounted by the simple device of running the amnesty car right alongside, and then stepping from that vantage upon the ramparts. Mr. G. C. Doran of Queenstown, the leader of the Munster Nationalists, was the first to mount the fortifications. A giant ironworker from North England was the second. Both of them extended hands to me, and I was the third to stand upon the platform. The invited occupants, including

some venerable personages, protested loudly at the wave of laughing stormers who soon filled every corner, but were bowed to the door and out with profound solemnity. Mr. Isaac Butt had been asked to be in the vicinity by accident, and a deputation now led him from his carriage in company with Mr. A. M. Sullivan, M.P., and Mr. O'Connor Power, M.P. The enormous assemblage, on recognising the genial face and snowy hair of the beloved chief, gave cheers on cheers from Rutland Square to College Green. Butt spoke the eulogium of the dead, and included other servants of Ireland beside the hero of the day. Sullivan and O'Connor Power improved the occasion with a couple of their best speeches. Lord Mayor Peter Paul MacSweeney was seen at the edge of the multitude to appear to contemplate an effort for the platform, but the wags of the crowd quickly dissuaded him by recommendations to keep his 'powdher dhry, and to go home to tay.' A vast concourse, chanting 'God save Ireland,' escorted the Home Rule leader to his house at the end of the meeting.

There was no second attempt on the part of Maynooth to recapture its political position under O'Connell until the catastrophe of the Divorce Court gave the great chance to supplant Parnell, almost fifteen years to the day since the amnesty car lay by and boarded the tall galleon of the Whigs in Sackville Street on August 6, 1875.

In this year Ireland suffered the loss of two men of great and remarkable ability in very different walks; one of whom was my esteemed and valued friend, and the other much more. The one was Sir John Gray, M.P., who died at the age of sixty, when all hoped he would see a green old age. He was the owner of the *Freeman's Journal*, which he conducted with great ability and patriotism. He had known O'Connellism, and Young Ireland, and the Black Famine. He had been knighted in 1865 for bringing the pure water of the Vartry to supply the needs of Dublin. He was experience, tact, and kindness personified. Sir John Gray was a Protestant Home Ruler. He left behind him his highly gifted son, Edmund Dwyer Gray, very soon

to be member for Tipperary in the Home Rule party. But the loss of the father was permanently felt like the fall of a supporting column of the Irish house. The other man of high distinction whom Ireland lost, and whom I mourned with peculiar regret, was John Elliot Cairnes, the political economist and jurist, born in the County Louth, and educated at Trinity College, Dublin. He became Whately Professor in his own university, then obtained a professorship in Queen's College, Galway—where he taught me for four years political economy and jurisprudence—and was made Professor of Political Economy in the University of London also. He met with an accident while riding a short while before I knew him first, and he told me that he feared he would never recover entirely. Spinal injury made his last illness full of suffering. Tall, spare, and athletic, he was the type of a horseman; while his refined face, keen eyes, and magnificent forehead showed the broad-minded thinker and scholar that he was. Along with the accomplished Sir Thomas Moffett, and the pious and patriotic Jesuit, Father John James O'Carroll, last Prince of Eily O'Carroll, it was Professor Cairnes who contributed perhaps most to the formation of my habits of observation and thinking. The old saying that 'circumstances alter cases,' he said continually, was the caution which all sound economists kept in mind, and which the most influential economists were habitually defying. 'Never forget your *Caeteris Paribus*,' he said a hundred times.

In the epoch of his death Professor Cairnes may yet be considered fortunate. It spared him the anguish of seeing the Queen's University, which he loved as the symbol and instrument of union among Irishmen of all denominations, destroyed by an unholy bargain—to which Trinity College, Dublin, was a self-betraying and country-betraying accessory—an unholy bargain between the Disraeli Government and the Board of Maynooth. If the wiseacres at Westminster believed that the purchase of the bishops was the way of peace, they erred once more. In 1879 England abolished the Queen's University in the height of its conciliatory

influence. In the same year Michael Davitt founded the Land League, which was soon blessed by bishops and priests in scores and hundreds. What had the Government—what had the classes connected with Trinity College, Dublin—made by their bargain? They had put out an eye of culture. Did they expect illumination?

CHAPTER VI

THE SESSION OF 1876

Great Activity of the Butt Party—General Indignation in England—The Indignation of the *Times*—Mr. Parnell a Routine Member—Land, Education, and Home Rule Debates—Progress of Amnesty—John Bright's Defence of the Manchester Martyrs—The Constitution of the Confederation.

IF the domestic legislation of the Disraeli Government in 1875 had somewhat deserved the mischievous congratulations of Sir William Harcourt on the blessedness of uneventful annals, all the foreign arena had been filled with movements—menaces neither uneventful nor destined to pass away. Two facts of the first importance to the credit of the Disraeli Government had marked its foreign policy. England had joined with Russia to prohibit a second attack upon France just when Prince Bismarck believed that the way was clear, and Mr. Disraeli effected the purchase for England of the Khedive's shares in the Suez Canal. If England had ever acted towards Ireland with the ability she has displayed a hundred times in foreign complications, there might be no Irish question to-day.

With the opening of the session of 1876, it was evident that the seriousness of the foreign situation was likely to be augmented; but it also became evident that the seriousness of the Irish situation—in Parliament at least—was quite certain to increase both in gravity—which a philosophic administration might have ignored—and in troublesomeness, which was an unpardonable matter. Though the policy which was to reveal itself a year later, in 1877, as fully as ever suited its scope and intention, was still in course of preparation outside of the purview of the House of Commons, and could not, in fact, be developed in Parliament in

the absence of its founder ; both the legislative energy and the retaliatory action of Mr. Butt's party were notably and successfully extended and accentuated. I do not find the slightest trace of any originality either in obstruction or anything else in the conduct of the new member for Meath, Mr. C. S. Parnell, during the session before us, although he had entered the House in the preceding April.¹ As a matter of fact, he was just being initiated into the new methods, but could not possibly put into execution a system with which he was never thoroughly acquainted, and which he still lacked even the knowledge to commence. On the contrary to all the fiction about a sudden genius imposing his novel ideas on the practice of Parliament, Mr. C. S. Parnell was for two years a routine member of the Irish party, doing his best by the party programme, and troubling about nothing more. Thus his name appears on the notice-paper of the House as the intended mover of a Bill for the reclamation of waste lands in Ireland, being one of the long list of Irish measures for which the party had obtained priority by a device of the most untraditional character.

This device was the following ; and whatever else it illustrates, it proves that Mr. Butt did not wait to be supplanted by the member for Meath before laying singularly innovating hands upon the customs of the House of Commons. Private members who had Bills to bring in, or resolutions to move, balloted at the beginning of the session for places for them on the coming Tuesdays and Wednesdays of the weeks to follow. With scores or hundreds of members balloting, there were not many chances as a rule for a good place for any particular resolution or Bill. Strange to say, the Home Rule members came out at top for nearly all the available days to the very end of the session. Mr. Butt had directed his followers to inscribe

¹ Even his superlatively admiring biographer, Mr. R. Barry O'Brien, can only find 'a really notable utterance in the House by Mr. Parnell on June 30,' of this year of 1876, or practically at the end of the session ; and this 'only' notable word was merely a statement that he did not believe that the Fenians executed at Manchester were murderers. But this statement had been made by everybody already from Mr. Isaac Butt to Mr. John Bright. The whole Parnell legend is mere legend.

themselves, not one for one, but a dozen for each Bill or resolution, and in this engaging fashion immensely multiplied the chances of the party as against individual members not acting in combination. There was wrath and consternation on all the other sides. There was an appeal to Mr. Speaker against the Irish ruse ; and Mr. Speaker had replied that, though the manoeuvre was contrary to tradition, and might require a new rule if repeated, still he could not declare that it was absolutely out of order. It was certainly very sharp practice. It rather belonged to the same class of expedients as that snipping the wires to prevent the dining Tories in St. Stephen's Club hearing the division summons to the House in time to vote. I do not defend either instance, though I voted at the snipping of the wires. But I have heard that English groups of irreproachable constitutionalism have also succumbed since those days to the temptation of correcting fortune. As a conscientious historian, I am only bound to relate facts which appear to reveal the more important happenings in the history of Home Rule at Westminster. These facts, at all events, make it increasingly difficult to admit that the abuse of the forms of the House was founded by Mr. Parnell or Mr. Biggar.

I believe I have a fairly complete list of the Irish members and the Irish Bills which so unfairly displaced their British rivals as aforesaid at the opening of the session of 1876.

MEMBERS.

MEMBERS.	BILLS.
Mr. Butt	University Education.
Mr. Butt	Land Law Amendment.
Mr. Mitchell Henry .	Registration of Voters.
Mr. Dunbar	Union Rating.
Captain Nolan . . .	Electoral County Boards.
Dr. Ward	Coast and Deep Sea Fisheries.
Mr. Parnell	Reclamation of Waste Lands.
Mr. Ronayne	Grand Jury Reform.
Mr. Brooks	Municipal Corporations Privileges.
Sir Joseph McKenna .	Town Rating Reform.
Mr. Biggar	Borough Franchise Assimilation.
Major O'Gorman . . .	Municipal Franchise Assimilation.

There was not much opportunity for the legislative effort of all the rest of the House when this Irish list had been adroitly interpolated between baffled Britain and the private member days of the year.

Nor was this all. On the Address, on a special two-day debate, on the estimates, the Irish party also insisted upon bringing forward the need of Home Rule, and the shortcomings of the administration in Ireland, with a distinct result of leading the House to drop more and more of its stereotyped attitude at the opening of this Parliament that the disestablishment of the Protestant Church and the First Gladstone Land Act had completely removed the legitimate grievances of Ireland. There can be no doubt that the whole House, independent of parties, was responding to the growing sense of the inconvenience to England and Scotland of Ireland taking at length seriously, after more than three-quarters of a century, the implied engagement of the Act of Union to legislate for Irish affairs as fully and thoroughly as for British interests of all sorts, and in this way to force British members to make an exhibition of steadily increasing piquancy, either of their indifference, or their incompetence, or both. The *Times*, which usually puts the best face available upon the anti-Irish tendency, was even at great pains to point out that the Irish Nationalist or Home Rule party was becoming, in fact, shockingly unfaithful to its most sacred traditions in insisting in this painful way—which was simply overcrowding the legislature—upon English and Scottish members legislating for Ireland. The rectitude of Printing House Square was quite hurt at this defection from the irreconcilable principles of Emmet and Wolfe Tone. ‘You deny our right to govern you, and yet you *will* bring in a whole flood of Bills!’ it wailed with a patriot’s emotion. Sometimes it twitted us with being driven ‘to surrender our principles’ by a desire to abandon an untenable position and to join in the ‘great game which was being played around us,’ and by the ‘admonitions’ of our constituents, who had been ‘seriously disappointed at the results of the

policy of isolation, inaction, and impracticability.' The past history of the Unionist House of Commons for three-quarters of a century had shown, forsooth, such encouraging results—'for our constituents'—from the exploded policy of identifying the Irish representation with English parties! Of course, the *Times* was in a sense quite correct. It would have been foolish in the extreme if Mr. Butt's party had not utilised every available occasion for trying to remove Irish grievances in the ordinary and parliamentary way, even though it is usually a way without an exit. We were no believers under any circumstances in the theatrical methods of abstention. Our policy had never been to do nothing, but to do everything possible, and to overthrow the Union as the certain road to do anything worth while. So we beheld, with an approach to calm, the tears flow down the pleading cheek of the oracle of the City and its lesser congeners, and we pursued our unpatriotic course in spite of all the British appeals to 'Remember '98.'

The Home Rulers began, not without reason, to regard the huge majorities which were assembled to crush their proposals as so much evidence of the anxiety of the enemies of our programme. The men of the newer policy, who were watching the progress of events from the council-room of the Home Rule Confederation, were also encouraged by the reports which reached them from a hundred branches and from innumerable correspondents and meetings, large and small, to recognise the spread of a national exasperation and desire for retaliation full of promise in the near future. We had long since begun to teach, like Wallenstein at Nürnberg, *eine neue Kriegsführung*, and we saw all the symptoms that the new tactics would be tried on favourable ground. The 'great game' to which the anti-Irish press invited us was being played exactly in the fashion that suited our calculations. The congestion of Parliament was directly increased by every obstinate debate on 'the interminable series of Irish Bills and motions,' while the perturbation of the Unionist parties at the perpetual recrudescence of the Nationalist movement was paralleled

by the widening excitement of the Irish race, in both hemispheres, as the demonstration of the incorrigibility of Westminster treatment of Ireland was pressed home by the most cogent demonstrations. The newer policy could never have come to its own but for the skill and stubbornness of the old policy, if a seniority of a very few years can justly attach the epithet of age to the founders of Home Rule. For my part I regard the old and the new policies as always one and the same, the earlier positions and movements being accelerated and extended to assist the evolutions of encircling columns and the occupation—or, at least, the visitation—of large and larger areas of hostile territory. Nor did Mr. Parnell, nor Mr. Biggar, no more than the Sullivans, Shaws, O'Connor Powers, Grays, Nolans, and a score of other colleagues, ever profess at this period, or ever believe at any period, that the march from the base involved the abandonment of the base, or that the acquisition of additional energy and efficiency required the disruption of the general organisation. Mr. Butt, in spite of irritation which was certainly not causeless, was no enemy of greater activity. His successor, Mr. Shaw, was its avowed supporter. Neither did any leader of the newer policy—not even Mr. Parnell—ever believe, or profess to believe, that the Parliament of England could be brought to its knees by simple obstruction. The full discussion of this matter comes somewhat later, when the genesis and growth as well as other developments of the newer policy will be discussed. Meantime, let me ask the reader to remember that the member for Meath was certainly no fool, and that Mr. Biggar was an extremely shrewd and successful man of business; and if he had been capable of believing that simple obstruction was everything, he never would have died worth £100,000.

The four main issues raised by Mr. Butt during this session were: Irish Land Reform, Irish University Reform, Irish Home Rule, and the Amnesty of the Political Prisoners. Each of these questions produced special and interesting developments, of which I shall speak, after referring

generally to some minor measures among the Bills which had been introduced.

The growing impression that all was not well in Ireland, which was the result of the tactful and forcible policy of Mr. Butt upon many of the best minds of the House, was clearly perceptible on the motions for the second readings of the Bills for the assimilation of the Irish municipal and borough franchises to the laws established for England. The former Bill was moved by Major Purcell O'Gorman, M.P. for Waterford, whose mighty proportions and Rabelaisian humour too generally diverted superficial observers from a recognition of the very high abilities and considerable culture of the honourable and gallant member. Though the proposal to require no more than equal qualifications with English municipal electors from Irish claimants of the municipal franchise seemed difficult to impugn, it was opposed by Sir Arthur Guinness, in pursuance of the usual hostility of Irish Conservatives to everything demanded by their countrymen, and by Sir Michael Hicks-Beach, the Chief Secretary, in pursuance of the similar policy of the Conservative Government. The alleged war-cry of Donnybrook factions had long become adapted as the settled maxim of British Tories: 'Wherever you see an Irish reform, down with it.' Nevertheless 148 members of the House voted for justice to Ireland against 176 who had followed Sir Michael Hicks-Beach. The corresponding Bill with regard to the assimilation of the Irish borough franchise was proposed by Mr. Meldon, Q.C., M.P. for Kildare, who had recently defeated on the Home Rule ticket the local influence and proud prestige of a Lord Otho FitzGerald. Though endorsed by the whole of national Ireland, it was opposed by Sir Michael Hicks-Beach 'until it was supported by some genuine demand'! Perhaps it was this blundering discourtesy of the Conservative Government which brought into the field the noble Liberal, the golden orator of reform, Mr. John Bright himself. In a speech, short, packed with matter, warm with indignant sympathy, instinct with Imperial wisdom and magnificent

eloquence, the great tribune of England defended the good right of Ireland and smote the folly of its puny persecutors. Never, it was said, had John Bright risen to higher levels of oratory aflame with the love of justice. Amid the silence which followed that thunder peal, a miserable majority of only thirteen votes on the side of that powerful Government attested the real conviction of the House. Not half a dozen years later, we were to hear Mr. Thomas Sexton, an elect of the Land League, treating a protest from John Bright against the reign of violence and intimidation in dishonoured Ireland as mere 'moral degeneration and intellectual decay.' To such a strain may dwindle human gratitude.

The end of June saw the introduction of Mr. Butt's promised measure to amend the Land Act of 1870. It was essentially a Land Tenure Bill and sought to avoid raising any question of diminishing the landowner's ownership—a difficult problem, if every interference with the exercise of former rights is held to involve diminution of the matter of the right. At any rate, Mr. Butt's Bill had been denounced in advance by a Kerry landlord of extreme convictions on proprietorial authority as being 'a Land Transfer Bill' instead of 'a Land Tenure Bill,' the land being transferred from the owner to the tenant. A few years later Mr. Butt's Bill was regretfully remembered by owners menaced with the theories of the prairie value school of agrarian politicians. At any rate, discontent with the working of the Land Act of 1870 was universal among the Irish tenantry north and south. It was especially complained that the tenant's claim under that Act to sell his tenant right had often been rendered illusory by all sorts of estate rules and conditions; that tenants above the limit of £80 a year should be as absolutely protected as the poorer grades; and that arbitrary eviction could only be prevented by the prohibition of arbitrary increase of rent. So long as non-payment of rent was a just ground of eviction—and Mr. Butt's Bill admitted this to the full—a landowner had only to screw up his rents to an unendurable

pitch in order to be able to walk without legal hindrance into the homesteads of his tenantry. Mr. Butt proposed to protect the tenants efficiently in all these cases. The representatives of the landlords in the House of Commons were fortified by the support of both the front benches, and the Bill was rejected by practically the whole House against the Irish party. As it turned out, it was a very stupid decision of the whole House.

Personally speaking, my experience of European conditions has left no doubt on my mind that no remedial legislation whatever, no agrarian reform however ingenious or however extensive, has the slightest chance of producing agricultural peace so long as the landowners are trained to detest the national convictions and aspirations of the cultivators of the soil. The Germans are a highly cultured and scientifically disposed community, but if Yorkshire or Lincolnshire were owned by German landlords, I should not stake a large amount on the continuance of the commencement of neighbourly relations between such German squires and British farmers. I doubt, even, if the best landlords in England would be more successful in Pomerania. It has been a constant object of the British Government to make the Irish landlords worse than German aliens to Ireland, especially exerting itself in this direction and for this effect whenever the Irish landlords betrayed a disposition to become Irish. Having thoroughly succeeded in estranging the ownership and the cultivation of the soil in Ireland, the British Government, believing that it had no more use for its ancient dupes, has been periodically busy in flinging the Irish landlords to the devil. That is the succinct and absolutely accurate history of the controversy.

In the middle of May Mr. Butt's Irish University Bill had obtained the harmless compliment of a first reading; but the refusal of Sir Michael Hicks-Beach to afford further facilities for the measure ensured its last sleep without further remark. I considered it at the time as rather a demonstration of goodwill towards the Maynooth hierarchy

than anything else. The leading Home Rulers were both aware of the small amount of love for Irish self-government which was entertained at the Vatican, and consequently in the Irish Catholic Episcopate, and of the assurances of a desire 'to meet the legitimate anxieties of your lordships' which had been received by the bishops from the Tory chiefs ever since the failure of Mr. Gladstone in 1873 to satisfy the clerical demand for monopoly of control over the higher education. Mr. Butt had largely adopted the plans of Mr. Gladstone, but with extensive modifications in the way of endowment and control at the disposal of the bishops. Trinity College was to have its counterpart in a new college in the same university for the special benefit of Catholic students, and was to contribute a large share of its funds towards the support of its Catholic partner. In grateful recognition of the hostility of the Irish members of all shades to Mr. Gladstone's Bill three years before, which had caused the fall of the Liberal Cabinet, the whole of the leaders of the Liberal opposition now turned their backs on Mr. Butt's measure, not even appearing in the House during its discussion. Knowing the traditional attitude of Trinity College towards Catholic claims, it is superfluous to describe the sentiment expressed by its representatives towards a proposal to contribute a portion of its own revenues towards a Catholic endowment. Having made his more or less politic demonstration of zeal for the Maynooth point of view, Mr. Butt must have had the consolation to know that very probably he had not conciliated a single bishop. As a matter of fact, the bishops were much more interested in the destruction of the Queen's University than in the provision of any Catholic equivalent; and Mr. Disraeli's Government had fully assured them of its willingness to effect this decapitation on an early occasion; an engagement which Sir Michael Hicks-Beach's successor in the Chief Secretaryship, Mr. James Lowther, carried out in 1879; without much profit apparently even for law and order, while a deadly blow was dealt at the higher education of Irishmen.

I may mention that my own convictions have always

favoured a great deal of Christian instruction in the university of a Christian country, as Christianity is the fundamental fact of European civilisation ; and I have recommended the adoption of the dual chairs system of German universities of united education ; the great subjects of denominational philosophy and history being treated by denominational professors, while the general course of secular studies belonged in common to all students without distinction. I have stated also, forty years ago, that no teacher of an establishment of united education should remain in his post after being condemned, say in Ireland, by the unanimous vote of a national synod. This would be a guarantee that the objection was serious and grave ; and, of course, it would be criminal lunacy to force so obnoxious a teacher upon a university open to the general body of Irish youth. Clerical control, or the government of a university by ecclesiastics, perhaps by religious orders bound to foreign superiors, is a matter which is totally different, and in my conviction totally injurious. We have an example of the worst possible kind of this clerical control in the so-called National University, which is the latest of English experiments in the conciliation of the Irish bishops. In this latest creation, the governing body consists of thirty-five senators, twenty-five at least of whom are either prelates and Jesuits or lay dependants who in most cases stand in the position of salaried employees of the clergy, including some female communities. As the Dublin saying has it, 'What is the National University?—Just two reverend fathers and two reverend mothers.' This means, in the first place, that not a single educated Catholic in the country can expect a professorship or teachership except by the choice of a small group of ecclesiastics who are quite irresponsible to public opinion or academic authority outside of themselves. Greater discouragement of the higher studies cannot be conceived. When this is the pass to which British Government has to-day brought Irish university education, we might be tempted to congratulate Mr. Butt on having failed to gain the support

either of Government or Episcopate. *Melius mori quam foedari.*

It must be thoroughly understood that I am convinced of the entire sincerity of the religious authorities both at Dublin and Rome in their belief that such clerical absolutism is a guarantee for orthodox religion, and that orthodox religion is promoted by the policy. Rome, like the Board of Maynooth, which is, of course, constructed in its image and likeness, has before now insisted upon a similar system wherever it had the power. But political clericalism always and invariably contrives its own ruin, though seldom without grave injury to many things which it sought to benefit; and to-day there is not a Catholic nation in universal Christendom which would tolerate for ten minutes in its National University the rule of 'two reverend fathers and two reverend mothers' which has been established in the interests of Unionism in Ireland. I know the Irish Catholic clergy well, and I am certain that they are deeply, earnestly, honestly convinced of their right and duty to interfere in all those secular affairs, from conducting an election to establishing a creamery or suppressing a newspaper. They forget, or they do not choose to remember, that just in proportion to the intrusion of the clergy into lay business, the laity are deprived of the opportunity and dishabituated of the faculty of self-administration and self-control. Like a disused muscle weakening to atrophy, the disused laity become mentally and morally disheartened and unfit.

It was to be observed, as a curious evidence of the total lack of understanding, or care, of the interests which were most engaged, that neither the supporters nor the opponents of Mr. Butt's Irish University measure, or any other Irish University measure which has ever been mentioned at Westminster, stopped to ask themselves the question, How were the poor young men of a poor country to attend any university whatsoever, in the absence of endowments for the assistance of students, and in the absence of schools to prepare them, equipped also with endowments to support them during the time of preparation at school? In the

whole of the Queen's Colleges, north, west, and south, there were only thirty miserable entrance scholarships of £24 for the whole of Ireland. How on earth were the sons of poor, and very poor, parents to bear the expenses of three or four years far from home without any endowments available for students at all? Even if they could get a little school education in the neighbourhood of their homes, how were they to live at the university—a university whose scanty endowments went for necessary professors and necessary upkeep? They simply were shut out of university education by their poverty; and then a lot of silly or misleading persons of all kinds cried out that it was 'on account of their consciences.' It was certainly on account of their empty pockets and the empty treasury of a university which had no endowments and no rewards, no matter what were the talents that were ready to win rewards if they had existed.

What made the universal indifference to the vital question of assistance for poor Irish students the more extraordinary this year was the circumstance that, just before the introduction of Mr. Butt's Bill, both Houses of Parliament had been occupied with the consideration of Government measures concerning proposed reforms in Oxford and Cambridge Universities—a chief object of which was declared to be the increase of pecuniary facilities for students of straitened resources. I remember that the Archbishop of Canterbury openly and emphatically declared that what was wanted above all in the English universities was a great increase of facilities for the poorer classes of students. 'I am the representative,' said his Grace, 'of some 20,000 clergymen who have the greatest difficulty in obtaining a university education for their sons. . . . I think that a more natural use of the College revenues could not be found than that of enabling university education to be given at a cheaper rate to those who desire to avail themselves of it.' We may sympathise with the hard case of poor clergymen of the Church of England, and there are many other categories in England also deserving of

consideration in the matter. But how was it, and how is it, that nobody spoke, and nobody speaks, of the absolute impossibility of the sons of poor Irish farmers and traders getting university education in the absence of endowments at entrance and endowments during the years of collegiate studies? I have known a dozen poor Catholic students in Queen's College, Galway, who were barely able to make ends meet by means of the poor little scholarships which they had won; and I have known many dozens of poor Irish lads, full of intelligence and grit, who had to stay outside the College doors because the scanty endowments did not reach to their education. Assuredly is party government a loathsome swindle. Neither side cared nor cares about the Irish student, but only about the manipulators of the Irish vote.

The discussion of Mr. Butt's motion on Home Rule this year was marked by some significant incidents. The form of the motion was for a committee of inquiry into the Irish demand. 'Choose your most statesmanlike, your most experienced and distinguished members to investigate the grounds and the expediency of our claim—of Ireland's claim—to the restoration of Irish self-government. We challenge the inquiry, and we expect with confidence the verdict of able and high-minded men.' It was afterwards made the excuse for a Parnellite sneer at Mr. Butt and his policy, that he asked for an inquiry. 'Why not fling the illegality of their Act of Union in their faces? Why inquire, when everybody knows?' All which is cheap, very cheap, bravado. Besides other reasons, Mr. Butt had received the advice of the most experienced leaders of the Home Rule Confederation; which, consisting of Irishmen resident in England and Scotland, and continually engaged in the Home Rule controversy in British constituencies, was qualified in a high degree to estimate the best methods of influencing British opinion. A motion for inquiry was found to be generally recognised by English audiences in London and the provinces as an eminently equitable demand. 'Why will they not even inquire into what Ireland wants?

There is no excuse for that.' Mr. Butt was not playing merely for notoriety and self-advertisement. He was quite prepared to admit that the time might come, when even solemn departure from Westminster, and deliberate abstention in Ireland, might have to be adopted as the announcement and the bond of a situation of extreme gravity. He wished, however, to have it understood that when that grave crisis arrived—should it arrive—then it would be best for Ireland to have the opinion of Irish moderation prevalent among the English masses, rather than the contrary impression.

It is unnecessary to recapitulate the speeches, sometimes exhibiting much power, which were made from the Home Rule benches, and to which the Chief Secretary replied with an absolute negative in the name of the Government supported by the Opposition. Sir Michael Hicks-Beach had appealed to the great and increasing prosperity which Ireland had enjoyed since the Union ; and most of his hearers no doubt would have been absolutely incredulous that there had been an awful famine unparalleled in Europe, during which Irish coroners' juries regularly found the British Premier guilty of murder ; and that a frantic emigration, also unparalleled in Europe, was continuing to attest the Chief Secretary's description of Ireland's abounding gains. The piquant and picturesque feature of the debate was the interposition of Mr. P. J. Smythe, M.P. for Westmeath, as a repealer of the old school, and in repudiation of Home Rule Federalism. The speech was one of high ability, and of the rarest and most classic beauty. The *Times* the next day declared that by universal consent Mr. Smythe's speech was by far the best which had been delivered since the commencement of the present Parliament. I heard it all from a seat below the Gallery, and found it, indeed, beautiful, polished, moving, delivered with perfect modulation and with a serene dignity which was profoundly impressive. I think it still the most perfect piece of refined and restrained eloquence I have ever heard. Strange to say, it was welcomed with unbridled delight by both English

parties because it was directed against Mr. Butt's plan of a federal connexion with England and the Empire. Mr. Smythe demanded absolute separation of the two kingdoms, with no element of connexion beyond the two crowns being worn by the same King—a curious reason for satisfaction from a British point of view, but party politics and national antagonisms have these surprises.

I have already said or hinted, in connexion with Mr. Smythe's field-marshalling the coal-porters against the amnesty procession at the O'Connell centenary the previous year, that Mr. Smythe had not always been quite equitably treated by the Home Rule managers, nor with the deference which his talents and his services to Irish nationality required. Mr. Butt himself, in spite of his high qualities of head and heart, was by no means an impartial or unbiased leader. There may have been personal matters. In small places like Dublin, where everybody knows the business of everybody else, there is bias in all corners, and personalities are common talk. In the course of one button-holing a Dublin acquaintance may give you a hundred particulars perhaps as authentic as the most circumstantial stories in the Egyptian voyages of Herodotus. The effect on the unwary visitor is more puzzling than complete ignorance. I thought that Mr. Smythe ought to have been asked to take a prominent place from the outset, that his foibles should have been respected as much as possible, that his fidelity to repeal should have been utilised rather than derided, and never derided. After all, Mr. Butt's Home Rule was distinctly a step towards Imperial union. If England did not like it, there was Mr. Smythe's haughty repudiation of every connexion with England beyond the glamour of a common diadem. If the English jibbed at one form of Irish nationhood, why, there was another—still more national. Our business was to develop the national idea, to increase the national power. If we did not get the lesser arrangement, then we made the demand for the greater purpose. It was clearly our policy to show that if England rejected nationhood and union, there were plenty of Irishmen who all

along thought union an unprofitable encumbrance. If smitten on the one cheek, we should most decidedly *not* offer the other for a similar salute. If Mr. Smythe's argument against Home Rule was nothing else, it was a proud and moving invocation of the historical and separate nationhood of Ireland, which had never been eradicated by foreign enmity, and would never be surrendered—not one iota of it—under any compromise whatever. I was a Home Ruler. I was not only content, but solicitous, to retain and extend my nation's part in the common Empire. But if the opponents of my nation did not like it, they might lump it. The Irish flag, at all events, was nailed to the mast. None of us wanted to lower an English flag.

In spite of the combined front which the two benches of the ins and outs had shown against Home Rule, a sensational event occurred at an election this year in Manchester itself. Both the Conservative candidate, who was beaten, and the Liberal candidate, Mr. Jacob Bright, who won, pledged themselves to vote for the Home Rule inquiry. Mr. Joseph Cowen, the celebrated member for Newcastle, was already an avowed Home Ruler. Mr. Alexander MacDonald, the miners' member for Stafford, was also one of ours.

Other manifestation of the deepening hold of the facts of the Irish case were witnessed on the motion or motions for the release of the Fenian prisoners proposed by Mr. O'Connor Power. First, there had come a question by Lord Mayor Brooks, M.P. for the city of Dublin, a Protestant Home Ruler, a leading merchant and manufacturer, a large employer of labour—every kind of Conservative interest at once. He asked when the clemency of the Crown would be extended to the Fenian prisoners who were now already suffering from seven to ten years in the hell of English convict prisons. Some of these political prisoners were men of scholarly education, many were young men of the middle and farming classes who had been the most respected and popular in their neighbourhood, some were ex-soldiers of the British Army who had been con-

demned for complicity in the Fenian movement, often on the evidence of a very bad description of spies and informers, and none of whom had fired shot or lifted hand against the Crown. The whole of Ireland was simply seething with fury at the torturing indignities heaped upon these young men. I should except from the whole of Ireland the landlord class, as a rule, and the Trinity College party everywhere. These had the air of sneering also at the suffering men, and their ungenerous attitude all went to the wakening of the day of wrath which was at hand. It was the Prime Minister who replied. Unfortunately Mr. Disraeli was in his most imperial and superior mood. He analysed the cases of the prisoners, showing elaborately how few of them could be considered political offenders at all, mere ordinary criminals with a bent for disloyal disturbance. As for the soldiers, they were bad and unprincipled mutineers. The Crown could not extend clemency to such. The manner of the Premier suggested base, low instincts and tendencies in the Fenians, even more than his phrases. If he had deliberately desired to work mischief in Ireland and throughout the Irish race, he could not have done better. A motion for the adjournment of the House was moved by Mr. O'Connor Power, who had been notoriously a Fenian and member of the higher authorities of the conspiracy, but who was universally recognised as an able and conscientious worker in the cause of all English and Irish reforms, besides being the possessor of an oratorical gift with hardly any superior in the Parliaments in which he sat. But for the accident of not having been discovered while repression was in progress, Mr. O'Connor Power, M.P., was everything wicked and incorrigible which Mr. Disraeli had castigated in the helpless and silent men at Portland and Dartmoor. Mr. O'Connor Power was able to point to a list of nearly 150 British members of the existing Parliament who had signed a petition for commutation or pardon for the political prisoners. A couple of months later, on August 2, Mr. O'Connor Power was enabled to move a regular and formal resolution which demanded the release of the convict

Fenians. The debate which followed was the occasion of memorable utterances. Above all, it produced the speech in which Mr. John Bright deliberately, clearly, calmly, with all the impressiveness due to his high character and to his simple and splendid form of language, repudiated and condemned the common official practice of speaking of the three Fenians executed at Manchester as 'murderers,' and of their offence as 'murder.' This was the affair of the nine-year-old rescue of the Fenian leaders, Colonel Kelly and Captain Deasy, from the police-van at Manchester, on which occasion a constable in charge, Sergeant Brett, lost his life, apparently by the effect of a pistol-shot fired to burst open the lock of the van door, behind which Brett was crouching and watching the assailants through the keyhole. Nobody could even say who fired the shot which caused this accidental calamity. On the theory, however, that everybody who partakes in an illegal action is responsible for the worst that can be alleged against any of his comrades, first, five men were found guilty of murder, and afterwards three of them were actually hanged, after the two others were proved by subsequent evidence to have had nothing to do with the affair at all. All five were condemned by the same jury, but three had been picked out to die as murderers for the accidental catastrophe caused by somebody unknown! As I have already said, the triple murder by the law of the young Fenians at Manchester produced the gravest exasperation, wherever an Irish population existed, throughout the world.

The House was hushed in attention as Mr. John Bright arose to protest against the name of murderers being applied to the slain boys. I quote a few passages from his speech, which serve to show how completely this great Englishman supported the Irish view and rebuked the offensive falsehood of the official assertions.

In the case called the Manchester outrage there was one man killed, one fatal shot fired, and only one man in a certain sense guilty of murder. . . . Three men were hanged. . . . I think to hang three men for one fatal shot was a mistake—a mistake

according to the order and practice of our law and a great mistake when we look at it in its political aspect. . . . I have always held, and hold now, that it was solely because it was a political case that three men were hanged for the murder of one man. . . . It was a great mistake that the extremity of the law was put in force against three men, only one of whom—supposing the one who committed the offence was captured—caused the death of the unfortunate and lamented policeman.

Great was the sensation, crushing the blow to the official opinion. 'Supposing the one who committed the offence was captured.' Mr. Bright admitted that there was no sure evidence against even one man. And three young Irishmen had been hung, and their hanging was itself judicial murder for political reasons ! It was evident that the whole basis of the theory, the cruel and scornful theory, on which the Government had insisted upon treating Irish rebels as mere criminals, was crumbling into dust ; and we felt that the prison doors could not be kept closed very much longer upon men who had loved Ireland better than their own lives.

Almost at the same moment the *Times* itself, after the debate on the matter raised by Mr. Butt's party, had declared in express terms : ' If the Government are wise, they will learn from this debate the propriety of bringing in, at the earliest opportunity next session, a large measure of Irish reform.' What Irishmen were accustomed to call the edifice of ascendancy was visibly cracking and falling on every hand under the blows delivered by the Home Rule party. It was perfectly true that the main position—the restoration of Irish self-government—remained apparently unaffected by concessions on minor points. But it was antecedently impossible that, under the immemorial laws of English party government, a ministerial party, which possessed an overwhelming majority, could reverse its attitude on such a fundamental question as Irish Home Rule without ever having been placed in danger of losing its majority. The turn-right-round manœuvre is never executed by a conscientious leader in England except with

a view to a General Election or after a General Election. Remarkable as had been the success of Mr. Butt in impressing English opinion, and filling with the name of the Irish nation a House of Parliament which had long believed that such a name would never again be heard within its walls, there still remained more than enough to do before Englishmen as well as Irishmen could be brought to recognise that the situation under the Act of Union was intolerable—especially for Englishmen. There was no reason to complain of Mr. Butt ; there was every reason to feel pride and gratitude for what Mr. Butt had done. But his policy required supplementing, and the supplementer had already completed his programme—of aid and stimulation to the existing Constitution. The hour was at hand.

Meantime great Imperial questions and problems were pressing in many quarters upon the care of the British Senate. The balance of power in the East, the stability of the Turkish Empire, the rise of another Christian nationality out of the slavery of Ottoman misrule, the return of Russia to the sphere of influence and action from which the Crimean War had been waged to expel her, the watchful rivalries of France and Germany, the revival of Austrian ambition in the Balkans ; here was an agitated European background for the domestic drama of English and Irish opposition. The succeeding years brought graver crises. The European background was to become still more menacing ; African questions, both northern and southern, were to present fresh enigmas for solution or suppression. A new factor had risen in Parliament and in Ireland within the seas and beyond the seas. How different the present position of the Empire abroad might appear to-day if in the 'eighties and 'nineties General Elections had taken place on the expansion and conservation of British influence, instead of the internecine contention at home which was to make and unmake British Cabinets through a quarter of a century.

Two deaths occurred in 1876 which much affected Irishmen. Mr. P. J. Ronayne, M.P. for Cork, was only

fifty-four years of age when he was taken away from parliamentary friends who esteemed him, and from Cork where he was the leader of the Home Rule party in Munster. When Mr. Parnell was subsequently wooing the constituency of Cork, he thoughtfully attributed to the lamented Ronayne the first suggestion of obstruction. Mr. Parnell was sometimes more adroit than accurate; but it is possible that Mr. Parnell heard Mr. Ronayne repeat some of those suggestions for greater activity and scope of activity which were circulating in all Irish circles contiguous to the Home Rule Confederation. But why should Mr. Parnell wait for Mr. Ronayne? Mr. Parnell had been apprised of the policy of the Confederation before ever being elected one of its vice-presidents. The other death, causing much sentimental interest in Ireland, was that of Baron Deak, the founder of the Austro-Hungarian agreement which gave back to Hungary its ancient Diet. On my proposal, the executive of the Home Rule Confederation sent telegrams of condolence to the deceased statesman's political clubs and societies throughout Hungary, dwelling ingenuously on the common ideas which united the federalist patriots of Hungary and Ireland, and receiving, to the intense disapproval of a certain press in London, several most friendly assurances in reply to our message of sympathy. Of course I only used a pretext for a comparison encouraging to Ireland.

Perhaps here is an expedient occasion for a brief account of the Irish Home Rule Confederation of Great Britain, which had been selected as the means for launching the new development of Irish policy. I think that its original founder may fairly be said to be, above all others, Mr. John Barry, subsequently a Land League M.P., but previously an influential member of the Supreme Council of the Fenian Brotherhood. He was the first honorary secretary of the Home Rule Confederation, and secured my election as honorary secretary in succession to him. This made me chief of the whole organising staff and central administrative authority throughout the Confederation, my directions

being valid until overruled by the Executive Council, of which I was a vice-president, along with others, and with a number of representative members of executive elected by the General Convention of the branches every year. Our president was Mr. Butt, and the ungrateful and discourteous substitution of Mr. Parnell for Mr. Butt in 1878 was the first clear corroboration that Mr. Parnell was working with persons who intended first to split, disintegrate, and, in Tammany phrase, capture the Home Rule party, and then to transform it from a national and historic to an agrarian and Jacobin organisation. Of course, this vice is inherent in all organisations with an elective basis. A cabal can usually capture a representation or quasi-representation. What is called democracy in such cases naturally proceeds by ostracisms and cliques. The mass of the electors find themselves handed over to new shepherds with little more real consultation than if they were the fleecy charges of Tityrus or Menalcas. The great national families, whose traditional ascendancy check such disintegration in ancient nationalities, have been wanting in Ireland since the emigration of the clan nobles after the Boyne.

Not to anticipate disaster, I return to the working of the Home Rule Confederation down to 1878. The foundation of the whole organisation was the branch, established in a district where the proportion of Irish residents was large; and by preference the formation of branches was promoted in constituencies where usually the Conservative and Liberal parties were nearly balanced, though there were exceptions to this rule. When I was hon. secretary, in 1876 and 1877, the number of branches varied round the figures 150; and I repeatedly addressed large audiences of Irish residents, under the auspices of the local branch, in all the chief centres of population between Bristol and Dundee, and Deptford and Glasgow, including Birmingham, Manchester, Liverpool, Newcastle, Hull, Leeds, York, and a score of other places. Glasgow was a very important centre, as a dozen constituencies in which the Irish vote

was powerful clustered on the Clyde, and were under the special supervision of Mr. John Ferguson, vice-president. Once a year the delegates of the branches met in Convention, usually in some central English town, passed in review the events of the twelvemonth, and elected the Executive Council for the coming session. The number of the executive members was usually twenty, besides the officials—such as the president, hon. secretary, paid general secretary and assistant-secretary. It was absolutely free to the Convention to elect what members of executive it pleased, but there was always an understanding that about half should be elected from residents in the city which was the seat of government of the Confederation, at first Liverpool, and subsequently London since my time. This precaution provided for a sufficient quorum to carry on the ordinary business on the spot ; and in case of important motions there was always timely notice to allow of the attendance of the executive members in the provinces. I found the whole organisation both democratic in the best sense and sufficiently concentrated for effective command. It is noteworthy to remember that the democratic constitution was abolished after 1880 ; when the Land League absorbed the old organisation ; and that an executive of seven members of Parliament, all supported and nominated by the Land League ring, ruled the branches without appeal. As will be seen, the substitution of a Tammany centralism for the old freedom of Butt's Home Rule became the dominant factor of the Land League in Ireland also, and of its kindred successors or continuators. When I was hon. secretary and vice-president in 1876 and 1877, the organisation, under the supreme presidency of Mr. Butt, was at its height of freedom, power, and energy, affecting a vast extent of England and Scotland, occupying almost all the chief constituencies—it was estimated that we held a strong position in sixty British cities and boroughs—and capable at very short notice of arranging large and sometimes vast demonstrations of Irishmen in meetings and processions. I remember that in my time we took the Crystal Palace and

grounds for our St. Patrick's Day festival in one year, and the Alexandra Palace and grounds another year. I addressed meetings of 6000 at Leeds, 5000 at Liverpool, 7000 at Glasgow, and large meetings in many other centres. Sometimes no hall could be got to hold our multitudes, even in the provinces. Thus, I addressed a meeting of more than 10,000 in the open air at Jarrow-on-Tyne, being mostly Irish miners and ironworkers. Manchester Town Hall; St. George's Hall, Liverpool; St. Andrew's Hall, Glasgow; the Town Hall, Newcastle, were visited by me on several occasions, and the places were always packed to the doors, always with influential local men in the chair and on the platform to support the central representative. On our executive at London there was an admirable and powerful combination of representative men of all classes—such as Messrs. Goulding and Howe (who were City merchants of good standing), Councillors Ferguson and McAnulty from Glasgow and Newcastle, Messrs. Enright and Ryan (representing most important Irish workman elements), Messrs. McCrae and McGhee, who were journalists, some doctors and lawyers, and two of the most efficient paid secretaries ever possessed by any organisation—Captain Kirwan, who was a strict disciplinarian, perhaps from his military experience, and Mr. W. J. Oliver, of a good Limerick family, and formerly a lieutenant in the Royal Navy. About this time a young Liverpool clerk, named Frank Byrne, entered our service as paid assistant-secretary on the recommendation of Mr. Butt himself, who had received high testimonials to his steadiness and intelligence from Liverpool employers. The young clerk was quiet and diligent, and marrying an extremely pretty girl from Liverpool led the most domestic life possible, always devoted to the duties of the office, to our great satisfaction. These were the Mr. and Mrs. Frank Byrne who, four or five years subsequently, played a notorious part in the Invincible conspiracy, Byrne himself being hotly described by the *Times* in its famous series of inaccuracies as 'Private Secretary to Mr. Parnell.' He was only a paid official of the Confederation, nominated by

Mr. Butt and confirmed by me as hon. secretary long, long before the Land League and its brood came into existence.

The secrets of an honorary secretary of the Home Rule Confederation, continually called to compare the competitive promises and pledges of English candidates for Irish votes, are as sacred as those of a party whip of the Tories or the Liberals. He must keep confidences and his calculation must balance the values of a half-programme which will be kept and a complete swallowing of the pledge which will be swallowed and no more. The contest for the Manchester vacancy in this year was marked by great excitement and many incidents. The Conservative candidate, Mr. Powell, personally popular, promised to vote for an inquiry into Ireland's demand for Home Rule with little pressure, and his act spread consternation among the Liberals, for the Irish vote in Manchester was strong. Mr. Jacob Bright, the Liberal candidate, was the favourite of the Irish, but they could not support him against a Tory who had taken our party pledge. Mr. Bright freely explained that he sympathised with Home Rule, but did not like to go further officially than the Liberal party. Up to the very opening of the huge public meeting of the Confederation, with the president, Mr. Butt, in the chair, it was still believed that the Irish vote must be given to Powell. At the last moment it became known that John Bright's brother had crossed the Rubicon, and he was adopted with tremendous enthusiasm. It was quite common for us to meet Tory agents and local leaders throughout the constituencies who could not understand why 'Dizzy' did not snap Home Rule from the Liberals. 'Why should not the Irish have their own Parliament if they want to? God knows they'd be a good riddance. Not but the Rads are a thousand times worse.' That was the sentiment of numbers of genial, jovial John Bulls. It must be remembered that I am speaking of the time before the recrudescence or introduction of 'the methods of barbarism' among the Land League's allies had introduced into Anglo-Irish relations a peculiar and unpleasant deterioration.

To summarise the situation from the Confederation's point of view, there was no doubt that Mr. Butt had made everybody talk of Home Rule ; and the whole dream of a contented, West British Ireland, a provincialised Ireland, was felt to have vanished with the daylight. On minor reforms, on the amnesty to the political prisoners, which excited intense feeling, it was felt also that great progress had been made in English public opinion. On self-government we had only ruffled the Liberal and Tory doves ; and our resolution, in the words of a popular orator, was ' to put the English nose to the Irish grindstone, and to keep it there.' In the autumn of 1876 we took the novel step of holding our annual Convention of the Confederation at Dublin instead of any town in England, as had hitherto been our rule. My own motives in promoting this step were, in the first place, to give our branches an opportunity, which I thought they deserved, of showing the home Irish what the Irish in Britain had attained ; and secondly, to impress the home Irish with our desire for the more vigorous prosecution of the struggle for the Irish Parliament. Upon the first point I had no doubts at all. The 500 well-dressed and most intelligent men—including dozens of members of English municipalities and local boards, aldermen, town councillors, and similar authorities of local government—who appeared as delegates of the Confederation were most creditable to Ireland and to themselves. I busied myself especially with directing the attention of the home Irish to the respectable and influential position which had been reached by their countrymen in England and Scotland. The most of my speech was, in fact, an invitation to the home Irish to mark and applaud the extraordinary progress which had been made by so large a section of Irishmen who had comparatively recently landed in Britain as fugitives from famine and eviction in Ireland. I described the hard and unskilled toil by which the Irish in early days had earned their bread in England. Being universally sprung from an agricultural community in the old country, they had absolutely nothing to offer in the English labour market

but their health and strength alone. I pointed to the long roll of local and municipal representatives who crowded the benches of the Confederation. 'The sons of the hodmen who had earned a poor livelihood by attending and helping the skilled workmen of England,' I said, 'had now largely risen not only to skilled industries but to well-to-do occupations and professions. From manual labour they had ascended to intellectual attainments. They were to be found in responsible positions in fifty great centres of English population. They had begun by building the cities of England. They had ended by governing them.' The phrase gave immense pleasure to the delegates, and took the attention of the Irish press. One leading organ of Irish Conservatism commented quite approvingly upon the very creditable boast of one of the Irish working-men that they had begun, as hodmen and bricklayers, by building the English cities, and were now governing them as aldermen and town councillors. On the whole, the verdict of Irish opinion was extremely favourable to the men of the Confederation, and no doubt our outspoken demand for more energetic action on behalf of Home Rule stimulated or encouraged our sympathisers in Ireland. For seven years to follow I retained the affection and confidence of the men of the Confederation, and even when, convinced of the final breach with the national policy involved in Mr. Parnell's new departure, I resigned finally all connexion with party organisations among Irishmen, the representatives of the former executive endeavoured to the last to obtain a withdrawal of my resignation. It was impossible. That work could no longer be done; and I had work elsewhere. Perhaps it was a result of our introduction of the Irish name into the mourning for the restorer of Hungary which produced the step of some Dublin Nationalists to congratulate the President of the United States on the centenary of American independence, and to send Mr. O'Connor Power, M.P., and Mr. Parnell, M.P., as an Irish deputation to General Grant. The United States Government refused, however, to receive any address of the kind

from 'a portion of the United Kingdom' except with the approval and on the presentation of the British Ambassador. The delegates, though members of Parliament, refused to acknowledge the offices of the Ambassador! Mr. Parnell returned at once to Ireland, where the incident had not tended to assure moderate men. The most elementary knowledge of the international etiquette of governments would have prevented this wanton blunder. Besides, it was not playing the game. The person of the sovereign, the inviolability of his ambassadors, were quite above the party considerations in a constitutional struggle for the restoration of the King, Lords, and Commons of Ireland. But an assembly of Dublin politicians had excogitated the 'Address of the Irish Nation' to the American President, and Parnell had jumped at the distinction. The silly incident played exactly the game of all who maintained that Home Rule was veiled treason and separation. Traitors of any common sense would have avoided such a gratuitously idiotic revelation of their designs. As a matter of fact, Parnell was so far from separation, that at a public meeting of the Confederation held at Liverpool after his return, he claimed for his country only such a position towards England as the State of New York occupied in the American Constitution; being something, of course, far inferior to the King, Lords, and Commons of Ireland. Personally I regarded the whole escapade as the vanity of an ambitious beginner anxious to stand under the limelight upon any sort of stage. I had secured him and Mr. Biggar already for the new policy, and ought I to quarrel with recruits for being untrained? I expected to find varieties of their play which were not cricket, anyway.

THE HOME RULE PARTY AT WESTMIN-
STER: THE ADVENT AND ORIGIN OF
THE ACTIVE POLICY

VII. SECRET HISTORY OF THE ORIGIN, METHOD,
AND OBJECTS OF THE NEW POLICY—THE
COUNCIL OF THREE AT THE *MORNING*
POST

VIII. THE SESSION OF 1877—MY RETURN TO
PARLIAMENT — THE TWENTY-SIX HOURS'
SITTING — MY TREATY WITH PRESIDENT
KRUGER

CHAPTER VII

SECRET HISTORY OF THE ORIGIN, METHOD, AND OBJECTS OF THE NEW POLICY—THE COUNCIL OF THREE AT THE *MORNING POST*

The Session of 1877—The Advent of Obstruction—My Return to Parliament—Suggestive Summaries in the British Press upon the Year—The Secret History of the Origin, Method, and Objects of the New Supplement to the Irish Procedure at Westminster—The End of the Fairy-tales—The *Morning Post* as Council Chamber of Irish Retaliation—The Origin of the Active Policy—To promote or avenge Home Rule—A Policy of Universal Intervention—A Policy of Popular Reform and Interracial Alliance—The Indispensable Service of Mr. Adam Kernahan—How Mr. Kernahan popularised the New Policy—Not Westminster but Dublin defeated the Active Policy—A *Lion's Mouth* at Westminster—How I saved Arabi Pasha—England's Alternative.

DURING the session of 1877 I was enabled to resume my place in Parliament, after the interruption of two sessions caused by the selected judge who had disqualified me for my rightful constituency of Galway. I was elected for the borough of Dungarvan in the circumstances which form part of the following narrative. In its summary for the year the *Times* had to notice with surprise and pain what it described as an unprecedented and deplorable phenomenon in the conduct of Parliament :—

Of all recent sessions of Parliament that of 1877 has been the least fruitful of legislation. . . . The conduct of business in the House of Commons has been more seriously embarrassed by new and unexpected impediments; two or three Irish members have deliberately applied themselves to the task of paralysing the House of Commons. It had up to the present year never been found necessary to guard against the possible consequences of the caprice and obstinacy of a little knot of obstructive malcontents.

For the moment, I merely enter a respectful protest

against this representation of the spirit or scope of my design. I ask the reader to register the acknowledgment of the leading journal, that until the session of my return to Parliament, 'it had never been found necessary to guard against' the policy which had been introduced. Substantially similar testimony was practically universal in the press of all shades of opinion. Referring further to the new Standing Orders which had been introduced after my return to Parliament in order to guard what 'had never been found necessary to guard up to the present year,' the *Times* had the additional pain to record that 'The most scandalous attack upon the dignity and efficiency of Parliament has been made since the adoption of the new Standing Orders.' I respectfully ask the reader, I respectfully ask the editor of the *Times*—though he is no longer the Mr. John Delane under whom this comment was written—to believe that I make these quotations—as all the quotations in this book—entirely for the purpose of fixing the facts. I also ask the reader to remember that, as admitted by Mr. Parnell's super-eulogistic biographer, Mr. Barry O'Brien—'Up to the end of 1876 Mr. Parnell continued undistinguished, and almost unnoticed. He had not yet, so to say, drawn out of the ruck' ('Life of Charles Stewart Parnell,' vol. i, p. 98). Let me add, in partial anticipation of what will follow, that previous to my election for Dungarvan, an extraordinary meeting of the executive of the Home Rule Confederation had been held, Mr. C. S. Parnell, M.P., vice-president, in the chair, at which a resolution, proposed by Mr. J. G. Biggar, M.P., vice-president, was unanimously passed which called upon the electors of Dungarvan to return to the House of Commons at Westminster 'Our Colleague, Mr. F. Hugh O'Donnell,' vice-president and hon. secretary of the Home Rule Confederation of Great Britain.' Telegrams to the same effect were dispatched to Dungarvan by 130 branches of the Confederation.

For the moment I only ask the reader to bear the foregoing coincidences in mind. What was the plan of

campaign, whose was the plan of campaign, which produced that significant anxiety of Messrs. Biggar and Parnell for my return to Parliament, and which was followed by the unprecedented consequences summarised above by the *Times*? From the date of his first standing for an Irish constituency down to the opening of the session of 1877 Mr. Parnell had been 'undistinguished and almost unnoticed.' What was the reason of the total change? What had instructed him? Who had trained him? The explanation will now be given in full, and beyond the possibility of misunderstanding. I trust that the *Times* will not fail to perceive that parliamentary obstruction is a perfectly inadequate appellation for the new policy or new supplement to the policy of Home Rule for Ireland. That new policy, under all difficulties, has been carried through. It has been in the carrying through for thirty years. It has worked momentous results. It will work more. Its success can no longer be affected by the following lifting of the veil.

The fairy-tales which have surrounded the origin of what is known as Irish obstruction of Parliament are, indeed, curiously illustrative of the love of misinformation which dominates three kingdoms on most affairs connected with Ireland. A sudden and unprecedented revolution took place in the presentation of Irish discontent in the Imperial House of Commons. Instead of formal debates and argumentative protests, instead of strict devotion to Irish topics and respectful avoidance of British interests, instead of a tone of remonstrance and deference, there suddenly arose the opposite of all this. Ubiquitous intervention in the most divergent matters and calm assertion of superior information, disdainful avoidance of Irish complainings and ostentatious annexation of Imperial and English concerns, unambiguous censure and what angry ministerialists denounced as 'damned insolence'; here was a budget of novelties as unprecedented as unpleasant. The contents table of the *Times* was less varied than even a brief record of the subjects of discussion and exasperation which were perpetually flung with unruffled

precision at the heads of the Treasury bench. The Indian salt tax, the agricultural labourer, a judicial squabble in Trinidad, alleged misconduct of a Glasgow customs officer, Lord Lytton and the British Indian Association, flogging in the Army, slum landlordism in the East End, Sir Stephen Cave and the Egyptian bondholders, Lord Salisbury and General Ignatief, Mr. Plimsoll and Sir William Harcourt, interference with trade unionists in Lancashire, interference with Ismail Khedive in Cairo, Government sweating of tailoresses at Pimlico and official underfeeding of prisoners in Indian jails, accidents in British mines, British investments in Argentina, the cooking of the estimates and the appointment of ambassadors, a cruel eviction in Whitechapel and a magisterial sentence of hard labour for a technical trespass;—the budget of the new activity appeared to be a malignant epitome of the London and provincial press with copious instalments from both hemispheres into the bargain. As an historical result, the London and provincial press was agreed that the uncanny, omniscient business was outlined, patented, and accomplished by an uneducated young Anglo-Irish squire from Wicklow, who had been sent down by his English university without a degree, and by a mature dealer in salt provisions from Belfast, who was never known even to guess at the geography of Europe, Asia, or Africa outside of the St. Stephen's apartment! I underrate neither the courage—it was splendid—nor the multifarious capacity of a sort—I spoon-fed their legislative energies for years—of Messrs. Biggar and Parnell; but you do not make silk purses out of sows' ears, nor a political encyclopædia out of the unfurnished bookshelves of Avondale Manor or the business ledgers of a ham-and-bacon warehouse and retail stores. The age of miracles can hardly be past if Mr. Martin Tupper wrote the 'Idylls of the King.'

The mere, unmiraculous truth was, that there had existed here in London, in the offices of a busy London newspaper, in constant connexion with parliamentary business and knowledge, much more than the political

encyclopædia which was wanted to deserve the admiration or anathemas of legislators and to drive to distraction secretaries and under-secretaries. The *Morning Post*, dear to duchesses and to suburbia, had been for many years, in almost everything except the profits, an Irish Nationalist possession. I say nothing of its policy, which was the policy of its amiable, gifted, and diplomatic proprietor, Mr. Algernon Borthwick, afterwards Lord Glenesk. The leader writer on general affairs was an Irish Nationalist. The leader writer on parliamentary affairs and intelligence was an Irish Nationalist. The leader writer on foreign affairs was an Irish Nationalist. The leading writers on Art and Literature and the Drama were Irish Nationalists; but these latter had practically nothing to do with the councils or the counsels of the public affairs department of the paper. On the other hand, the Board of Research and Information, as we sometimes described ourselves for our own amusement, formed a complete and adequate co-operative society for political purposes, which had no reference to the conduct of the *Morning Post*, indeed, but which referred to almost every other subject under the sun that could influence the case of Ireland and its misgovernment. Properly speaking, it was not the misgovernment of Ireland which troubled us, but its government, good, bad, or indifferent, by anybody but the Irish nation. As things were, there could be no talk of good government. What was enforced upon Ireland was worse than bad. It was complacently stupid. Like other Irishmen, we had followed with interest the new movement of Home Rule created by Mr. Butt. Unlike a good many Irishmen, we had intimate opportunities of understanding how Irish affairs were considered at Westminster. In the case of myself, my knowledge was recent. In the case of my two colleagues, Mr. Sheridan Knowles and Mr. Baker Greene, an experience long before Mr. Butt's essay at conciliation had left them no illusions upon the Irish situation in the Houses of Lords and Commons. I believe it was Mr. Sheridan Knowles, the parliamentary leader writer,

who first conveyed to me an impression that ministries impervious to argument might be more sensitive to inconvenience. A man of wide culture, descended from a family of exceptional talent, Mr. Sheridan Knowles concealed, under a modest and retiring rule of life, very remarkable powers of observation and valuable powers of keen and exact criticism and estimation.

But it was Mr. J. Baker Greene, an Irishman belonging to an old family in Tipperary, I think, educated at Trinity College, Dublin, like most of the best Nationalists I have met, a man of extraordinarily wide travel and foreign residence, combining the qualifications of doctor in medicine, —he had been an Army doctor in the Crimea—barrister-at-law, and political journalist, who gave me the most formative suggestions and the most judicious and daring incitations to action. Subsequently himself a candidate for an Irish parliamentary seat, but repelled and nauseated by the empty bluster of Dublin Parnellism, he quickly understood my chances for Parliament, and generously aided my ambitions by every intellectual stimulus and every encouragement of friendship and comradeship. There may be Londoners still living who remember the mordant irony of Baker Greene on subjects of literary and dramatic interest in the smoking-room of the Savage or the Garrick. The memory would assist a comprehension of the effect of that terrible irony when turned, full flood, upon the tempting material of Anglo-Irish administration at Westminster. I venture to suggest to the London and provincial press that here was a masterly observer of the mechanics of London legislation somewhat better equipped for counsel and action than the excellent and resolute provision merchant from Belfast or the romantic and popular figure of the Wicklow-cum-Cambridge squireling who went up like a rocket and came down like the stick. Secretaries and under-secretaries who execrated the fiendish omniscience which dogged their daily routine were innocently unaware that all that omniscience was accompanied by the blessing and enjoyed the assistance of two of the

most experienced students of parliamentarianism who had ever looked down from the eyrie of the Press Gallery and analysed the impressions of the lobby. I wonder how long-lived will be that legend of the Belfast dealer and the Wicklow young squire who suddenly received, as on a second Day of Pentecost, tongues of universal information!

Two houses where I had the honour of a great intimacy after my arrival in London in 1871 were M. Charles Gavard's and Dr. Max Schlesinger's. M. Charles Gavard was afterwards *Ministre Plénipotentiaire* at the French Embassy till the victory of the Radical Republic in France. I used to be *persona gratissima* at the French Embassy in those days, as I was continually leader-writing in the *Spectator*, *Examiner*, *Morning Post*, and *Tablet* against the aggressive manœuvres of Prince Bismarck. At M. Gavard's table I met numbers of men of the finest information on European affairs; and I took a peculiar pleasure in hearing how under the Empire the Opposition deputies used to say and write everything at a time when the order was to say and write nothing. I devoured some writings of M. Beulé, who elaborated the very learned history of life in Ancient Rome under Augustus and Tiberius until it looked like a bitter satire on the Tuileries and St. Cloud. I was disturbed more than I can express now by the ignorance of those polished Frenchmen upon the very existence of Nationalist aspirations or a nationality in Ireland, *cette province Catholique de l'Angleterre*. With Dr. Max Schlesinger I found not only stimulus but invaluable criticism. Dr. Schlesinger was the London correspondent of the *Neue Freie Presse* of Vienna, and, I believe, quite a syndicate of German, Austrian, and Hungarian papers. At his evenings, Fridays especially, there was quite a world of foreign talent, music, and song. Great artists delighted to give their best to please Dr. Schlesinger, for he held a trumpet of fame. The condition of Ireland was sometimes discussed here with a biting candour. I heard Irish members of Parliament described as *Kaelber*—calves—and corrosive commentaries on the helplessness of the Irish representation found me an intelligent listener.

'You have no Windhorst,' said a Bismarckian German, an accomplished writer in three languages ; for the dreaded Little Excellency, who worried the Iron Chancellor almost to lunacy, was then a great name with friends and foes. All that made me meditate on the general contempt for passive endurance and the general respect for nations which help themselves. *Irlanda farà da se*. Would it ever be possible to make that boast ?

I brought my resentment and my meditations to my friends and colleagues Baker Greene and Sheridan Knowles. Those were the days when there was no Home Rule party, but only some Home Rule members round Isaac Butt. Mr. Gladstone was still reigning at the head of a ministry of most of the talents, and still convinced that the little Land Act of 1870 and the great Disestablishment and Disendowment Act of 1866 had all but glutted every want of the Irish heart. Just think of it ! There had been an abortive insurrection of the widest character. There had been the Clerkenwell Jail explosion, which was interpreted as 'a chapel bell' calling attention to the urgent need of satisfying Ireland. So to pacify the Fenians who wanted an Irish lay government, with neither Rome nor England in Irish politics for evermore, Westminster wisdom determined to please the priests—and the Nonconformists—by shutting up a few hundreds of Irish Protestant vicarages, and to bag £6,000,000 out of the Irish Protestant Church ! Was not that a wise Westminster ? But what of the Nationalist question which had opened the ball ? What about 'God save Ireland' ? The Westminster wisdom plucked up its collar and spake : 'There is no longer a Nationalist question. *We* have saved Ireland.' Whereat Sheridan Knowles and Baker Greene told good stories.

Suddenly or gradually, all at once or bit by bit, the solution seemed to us quite clear. 'Surely a great confused Government and Constitution, like the English Government and Constitution, trying to take in and do for hundreds of millions of human beings about whom it knows nothing and cares less—*more hibernico* speaking ; stodged

with business it cannot perform ; with a party system which turns out every ministry just when it has had barely time to learn its ABC ; with Bills on the top of estimates, and motions on the top of Bills ; with foreign affairs, and colonial affairs, and Irish affairs, and Indian affairs, and even Scottish affairs, all wanting to drive abreast through Temple Bar ; with 700 M.P.'s for the most part chosen by tossing up a halfpenny or something of that sort, and mostly following the whips in order to get invitations for their wives to ministerial tea-fights ; surely that academy of Laputa could be put out of joint, if there was a man to try.' So it was settled that I should be the man.

The National Home Rule Conference which was announced for the autumn of 1873 seemed to be the best available occasion for floating or launching at least a pilot or pioneer balloon. It would be an opportunity for testing opinions and perhaps of testing brains and determination. At any rate the experiment was well worth trying. I went to the Home Rule Conference. I listened for two days, keeping my mouth shut. On the third day I made a speech to say that Home Rule would move forward 'when Irish members of Parliament interfered in English affairs just so long as English members interfered in Irish affairs.' There were actually people at the Conference who agreed with the journalist 'from London.' A very big wig at the Conference, indeed, Mr. Mitchell Henry, M.P. for County Galway—a generous ally who deserved a better gratitude—actually said in a speech the next day—which showed that he had slept on it—that he entirely agreed with me, and went on to attribute to me a curious perversion of what I had actually said. I had spoken of a time when, in order to induce the English to see that Home Rule for us would mean Home Rule for them, Irish representatives would interfere in the business of England as persistently as the representatives of England now, to our heavy loss, interfere in Irish business of every kind. Mr. Mitchell Henry heartily remarked that 'it was very well said' by me 'that the interference of Irish members in the purely

local legislation of England and Scotland is an intolerable nuisance, and he would say, it is an intolerable shame.' When I told him that my idea was actually to make that intolerable shame far more intolerable for the suffering Briton, he cried: 'But there will be a revolution first.' Mr. Mitchell Henry, who was himself an Englishman and a Manchester man, had gone on to say, still fancying he was following my lead: 'This matter of giving votes on matters affecting the interests of their fellow-men across the water, of which they had not the smallest or the remotest idea, is an immoral system.' No doubt there was a large element of truth in this view, too, which corroborated my proposal. Often have measures injurious to England been passed by the votes of an Irish contingent supporting a British minority. Often has a minister in a minority in Britain been kept in power by supporters from Ireland. So much the more reason for pushing the nuisance to the unbearable point.

In the summary of my speech at p. 105 of the Official Report of the Conference—Dublin: The Irish Home Rule League. 1874—I am similarly represented as dwelling on the fact that 'the Act of Union had caused inconvenience to the people of England as well as to the people of Ireland. In conclusion, Mr. O'Donnell said that *the withdrawal of a hundred members from continual interference in English affairs* would be the greatest benefit to the English nation.' As a matter of fact, there had never been any such 'continual interference,' and the occurrence of such a phrase, completely unprecedented in Irish speeches, showed that I was speaking of a 'continual interference' which I came to recommend, and not merely of a 'continual interference' in the past or present, which had never existed either in the present or the past. Five years later, almost to the day, on November 21, 1878—my original recommendation had been made on November 19, 1873—at another Home Rule Conference in the same hall of the Rotunda at Dublin, I referred to my original declaration of that policy of mine in the presence of Mr. Biggar, Mr. O'Sullivan, and Mr. T. D. Sullivan, who had all been present at the Conference of

1873, as well as Mr. Parnell, who was absent in 1873. It was a clear, open, and absolutely unambiguous statement that I had proposed in 1873 the same active policy, the policy of continual interference in English affairs, which they were all supporting that day, five years afterwards. The witnesses were present. Nobody challenged my claim. It was universally acknowledged. It could not be denied. The report is contained in the Dublin newspapers of the following morning. Here are my words :—

Mr. O'Donnell looked upon the meeting that evening as the culmination of the whole of the struggle for the recognition of this movement. (Hear, hear.) On this floor of the Rotunda the final appeal in favour of an active policy has been fought and won. (Hear, Hear.) It was now some years since he spoke upon the floor of this house, addressing a great meeting of the Home Rule Conference, and stated then, fresh from his English experiences, that England would be glad to grant Home Rule to Ireland when a hundred Irish members should be found vigorously intermeddling in English politics. (Applause.) If they sent not a hundred but the third of a hundred such as Biggar and Parnell, he had no doubt that England would be heartily glad to grant Home Rule to Ireland in order to obtain Home Rule for herself. (Applause.)

Not a single man in that vast audience which packed the immense hall of the Rotunda had a word of protest against that claim and that declaration. The political education of the country had progressed since I had proposed the new policy, but the fact that it was I who had proposed it was unchallenged and incontestable, there in the presence of Mr. Parnell, with Mr. T. D. Sullivan, M.P., Lord Mayor of Dublin, in the chair.¹ I had stated the fact, simply as a natural reminiscence, speaking again in the very place in which I had originated the active policy ; and my

¹ This Lord Mayor of Dublin, Mr. T. D. Sullivan—an actual witness of the facts—emphatically denies the Parnell legend in his book, *Recollections of Troubled Times in Ireland* (Dublin: Gill & Son), and makes this correction: 'It would be a mistake to regard Mr. Parnell as the inventor and patentee of the Advanced Policy either in Parliament or out of it.' The obstruction tactics were 'started by Mr. Biggar and Mr. F. Hugh O'Donnell' (page 197). Of course, Mr. Sullivan was unaware of the inner history of my initiative, as it will be explained in these volumes.

statement—made, remember, in Mr. Parnell's presence—was punctuated by the applause of the great assembly. There is no more to be said. The suppression of the truth in so many treatises professing to deal with the subject was merely part of the boycotting policy of the Dublin Tammany and its salaried historiographers, aided by certain Englishmen who drew their political existence from the votes of the Land League. I founded the policy. I trained its first exponents. When Mr. Parnell became my runaway apprentice, I had taught him every detail of the trade which he spoiled. *Pauvre ingrat ! Pauvre Roi de Carton !*

When I returned to London after that introduction of our mutual discovery and invention to an Irish audience, I found Baker Greene especially in a dismal frame of mind at the treatment of my daily summaries of the proceedings of the Conference by the governing authorities of the *Morning Post*. Though I had been studiously accurate, suppressing all partiality, my notes had been printed in the worst type and in the worst place in the paper. 'If you had to tell of rows at the Conference, if you had described a scene of fisticuffs between Butt and Sir John Gray, it would have been printed in capitals, with a screaming leader about it. Ditto in every other print.' So growled Baker Greene. I turned the talk to an account of my interviews with leading Irish personages, assuring him that my press connexion was quite a feather in my cap on Liffey-side, that English newspaper people wanted what was interesting to their readers, that things would be different when he and I had made Ireland a good deal more interesting. I had really every reason to be satisfied. A score of influential Irishmen to whom I cautiously outlined the matter, as a sort of counsel of perfection, showed themselves favourable. Sir John Gray thought 'the Home Rulers ought to have something up their sleeve.' Mr. A. M. Sullivan suggested improvements. Mr. Ronayne of Cork only remarked: 'Where will you get men able to do it?' That remained the main difficulty to the very last.

Here is probably the best place, before continuing the

mere history, to describe what exactly was the active policy, as it issued, like Pallas Athene, fully armed from the leader-writer room of the *Morning Post*. It really was not the leader-writer room which held our councils; most usually it was my chambers at No. 8 Serjeants' Inn, Fleet Street, a near neighbour of the Serjeants' Inn chambers of Mr. Delane, the editor of the great enemy. My sitting-room at 8 Serjeants' Inn was for half a dozen years the headquarters of the new policy. It was handy between the East End, where the Confederation had its numerical force, and Westminster, where we exercised our parliamentary force. Biggar and Parnell came there by Underground from the House, or by omnibus-roof from elsewhere, as from Parnell's cheap lodging at No. 16 Keppel Street, off Gower Street. Thither came all the amnestied Fenians as they were released from Portland and Dartmoor. Thither came, tall, gaunt, and worn, Michael Davitt, with the Socialist's dream in his eyes, and unappeasable wrath against the existence of feudalism, or what he called so, in his stubborn mind and tameless heart. A true brother of Tom Paine and Jean-Jacques Rousseau, and Ferdinand Lassalle, with Mazzini and Fintan Lalor thrown in, Michael Davitt was always very, very near to Mr. Keir Hardie, and always very far from O'Neils and O'Donnells ancient or modern. An infant in Ireland, but an English-trained man and workman, copiously ill-read and uneducated by the Mechanics' Institute, inspired by the hot wine of Fenianism, a finer instrument of cosmopolitan discontent has never been draped in a tattered copy of the uniform of Robert Emmet. It was only natural that Parnell detested him, and that Davitt always had his knife at Parnell's back. Parnell might have been a Nationalist. Davitt was a Jacobin, a humanitarian Jacobin, but a Jacobin to the core. His was the mouth that denounces and the hand that pulls down. An amiable enthusiast, full of kindly and harmless ways: he always went to the *Comic Crusaders* or the *Merry Widow* when he came to London, he told me a couple of months before his death.

Generally speaking, a truth-loving man. As fit to counsel statesmanlike patriotism as a blind fiddler to manœuvre the Channel Fleet.

At all events, it was in No. 8 Serjeants' Inn that the active policy, the policy of interference and intervention, was framed and finished. I have never been able to add to it, only to continue it, during thirty years. Let me state the case scientifically. The Government of Great Britain and the dominions overseas was the subject of my treatment. Let us diagnose the condition of the patient. In the first place, we had a Constitution, sometimes invisible, which, constructed for a single country of moderate extent and an alternating system of profit and maladministration by a home circle of first families, had been applied, as you apply a tablecloth to cover a flooring, or a pint-pot to hold a gallon, to meet all the requirements of a conglomeration of 400,000,000 of persons who, as a rule, were not even conversant with one another, and who were often most alien and unknown to the handful of persons, more or less representing the first families variously diluted, who called themselves the British Empire. This Constitution had two features which were the special objects of my preoccupations. It claimed to be the absolute government of the nation and kingdom of Ireland, and to do the governing through certain Houses of Parliament, which also governed in a similar spirit all kinds of territories and possessions, besides extending a momentary and disdainful attention to certain absurd objects known as Irish grievances. My immediate remedy, our remedy, had been Home Rule or a radical withdrawal of the nation and kingdom of Ireland from these Houses of Parliament and their first families altogether. But the Constitution had refused to budge, had insisted on continuing to fudge and fuddle our business and everybody else's business; and we were prevented by certain circumstances from taking the usual proceedings in ejectment. There are more ways of killing a cat than hunting him with lapdogs. The Parliament had been virtuously wroth at our charges of neglect. 'Our

doors stand open. Come and transact all your affairs in our fond arms, on our step-maternal bosom.' Suppose we took the affectionate creature at her word? Brilliant idea. The motto, the universally advertised motto, of the Parliament was, as the music-halls used to observe, 'Let 'em all come.' I determined to 'let 'em.'

Or we might say, there was a castellated and ivy-grown mansion of no great dimensions originally, and still, though it had been stretched out here and bulged out there by incongruously constructed additions and apartments, anything but roomy even for its native possessors. But the possessors had insisted upon knocking down all the houses of other possessors in other regions over an enormous area, and in reply to all remonstrances replied: 'You are welcome with us: come to us. Do your cooking and your sleeping and your waking with us. All our manorial apartments are as much yours as ours.' As a matter of fact, there were not the tithe of the needed rooms, nor a kitchen for one-tenth the guests, nor any other domestic arrangements. Brilliant idea. Why not accept the generous invitation? The ramshackle old building had only been able to pretend to be a house of welcome for everybody, by relying on hardly anybody ever coming to sleep or to cook or to dwell there at all. The Parliament was just what children call make-believe. Brilliant idea. Why not make the make-believe a multitudinous reality? The original possessors had not room for their own family transactions as it was. Now there was to be no more *fictitious* invitation. Everybody was *really* to come, but, of course, 'most politely.' The politeness was the cream of the joke. It also kept the game going.

To drop imagery, and come to prose, I had a House of Commons absolutely unable to deal with the affairs which it professed to monopolise, and, accordingly, I proposed to help it to such a feast of affairs as never had dazzled its most sanguine imagination. Obstruction? Certainly not. Repletion, which is far more aldermanic and more effective. Obstruction is the refuge of hurry, or emergency, or ignorance,

or commonplace. It occurs at once to the speculations of the crowd. It appeals often to the admiration of fools. It is chuck-marble to chess, a street rabblement to the war game. Repletion, the delicate playing of the victim with the most appetising viands, the tempting of his inclinations at all hours and seasons, the satisfaction of every whim, and the suggestion of innumerable whims that would never have existed, the smiling indifference to his straining waistcoat and apoplectic visage, the piling up of the mountain of adipose tissue till the legislative Daniel Lambert is the paralysed portent of a gargantuan history ; what is obstruction compared to that magnificent stimulation of inordinate desire ? I proposed a permanent encouragement of inordinate desire.

I have by me the brief 'Code of Maxims for the Perfect Parliamentarian,' which represents the sum and total of our policy, so far as it is now convenient to reveal it.

FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES

1. Voluntarily to submit no serious Irish affairs to the legislation of a foreign assembly with no right to legislate for Ireland.
2. To remember, as an Irish deputy, that your only enemy is the English Government, but not the English nation ; especially if the English nation can be made, consciously or unconsciously, your ally against the English Government.
3. To remember that you are an Imperial member of Parliament in spite of the protest of your Irish nation, and that, therefore, your membership of the Imperial Parliament is to be used exclusively for the vindication of Irish nationality or for the defence of all nations which are oppressed by the English Government.
4. To remember that the Government time in the House of Commons is essential to the exercise of the functions of the Government ; therefore you are to work always, if possible, in Government time, and to help all members of Parliament who propose to occupy Government time.

5. To remember never to impede or prevent the exercise of any right of a member by a British member of Parliament, provided that he does not belong to the Government, that he is not engaged in a policy injurious to Ireland or her allies, or that he is not personally obnoxious or offensive to the Irish nation. Both the latter objections may be waived if the obnoxious member is spending Government time, or promoting an object obnoxious to the Government.
6. To remember that the British Government is a plutocratic oligarchy disguised from the people by the formularies of what is called popular election, but guarded from the people by all kinds of limitations, expenses, and qualifications, which make the election of Parliament as unlike a popular election as possible; and to be prepared to utilise these facts for the service of Ireland, without passing any judgment one way or the other upon their justification or non-justification. Your only care is Ireland.
7. To remember that the Empire consists of 400,000,000 people, all but 500,000 of whom have no conscious interest in the maintenance of any portion of its system or administration.
8. To remember, as an Irish deputy, that Irish intellect and valour won the Empire, but that English profit and power direct it.
9. To remember that nationality is sacred in Asia and Africa as in Ireland.
10. To remember to punish wrong, to expose injustice, to aid right, to remove pain, poverty, and suffering, not only because you ought, but because you do honour, and may do service, to Ireland.
11. To remember that there are international questions as well as parliamentary or popular ones, and that it was not only Grattan and the Volunteers, but Washington and the Americans who created an English difficulty, which was Ireland's opportunity.
12. To remember that a sword is sharper than a cudgel, and that a sword does not lose its point by keeping its polish.
13. To remember that all governments depend on human nature, and that England had factions and revolutions before, and can have them again.

14. To remember that all peoples require leaders, and that if Irishmen lead the English masses, it may be no harm to Ireland.

Some of these maxims may be derided as sentimental ; but they have all been tried, and all have been found to work.

It may be, it should be, added, that there was a very brief and beautiful 'Compendium of Tactics,' called by Mr. Edmund Dwyer Gray, M.P. for Tipperary, 'The Soldier's Pocket-book,' by reference to a famous compilation by General Sir Garnet Wolseley. It was dubbed also, not profanely, 'Biggar's Four Gospels' by, I think, Parnell himself. This summary of parliamentary science ran as follows :—

1. To work in Government time.
2. To aid anybody to spend Government time.
3. Whenever you see a Bill, block it.
4. Wherever you see a Raw, rub it.

But this belongs to the lighter side of chronicle. 'The Soldier's Pocket-book' was very frequently put to application, but all its curious sagacity formed a small part of a policy which not only made history for the moment, but has made history ever since.

'A sword does not lose its point by keeping its polish.' It will doubtless surprise the casual reader of the ordinary sort of references to the Irish obstructionists—who had aims far higher and wider than mere obstruction—to be told that during the whole of a stormy period of debate the original members of the combination were never provoked to the slightest word reflecting discourteously upon any member of the House, however bitter an opponent. A couple of expressions fell from Mr. Biggar in the very earliest times, directed against Mr. Disraeli, which were resented as personal impoliteness. It was not so. Mr. Biggar was a plain, uneducated man, who spoke and thought the rugged but not coarse idiom of Belfast. His phrase was misunderstood on a couple of occasions. His was one of the most courteous

natures that can be found anywhere. And the whole House got to understand this, so that there came to be no more genuinely popular person in all the assembly than the blunt, acid, determined Ulsterman. I remember having the opportunity of telling the following anecdote to Lord Spencer during the last illness of the venerated lady who had been the superbly lovely Countess Spencer. It was the height of the Land League. Lord Spencer as Lord-Lieutenant was responsible for the measures which were exciting the vehement wrath of the Land Leaguers in the House. Mr. T. M. Healy had commenced one of his most acrid deliverances against the Lord-Lieutenant. Quickly Mr. Biggar, whose keen eyes had recognised the wife of the high official, hurried beside Healy with the warning whisper : ' Hush, hush ! Stop that ! Lady Spencer is in the Ladies' Gallery ! ' The Earl wrote to me that the story had given his dear wife great, great pleasure indeed.

I do not say that Mr. Biggar and Mr. Parnell thoroughly entered into, or deeply sympathised with, the whole of the aims of the principles of policy cited above. I am quite sure that Mr. Parnell did not. He had not only his limitations in his chaotic ignorance, but he did not seriously want anything which did not directly recommend him to the section of opinion in Ireland to which he began very soon to appeal. He had no use for large views on the future of India or the elevation of the British masses. Mr. Biggar had far larger sympathies and far less personal incentives. But it must not be thought that Parnell was deficient, when he was my comrade and I could observe him, either in love of human progress or in sympathy with the suffering in England or elsewhere. When he took up the cause of prison reform, it is absolutely false that it was through mere obstruction. He wanted to improve a state of things which badly required improvement. He entirely concurred that the support of the English masses was worth an effort ; and he knew that, as in the example of Mr. A. M. Sullivan's defence of Mr. Plimsoll and championship of temperance on the platforms of the United Kingdom Alliance, there was a

way to the sympathies of the English public ; and that it ought to be attempted. I repeat my conviction—and I am an experienced observer of men—that Mr. Biggar was far the broader minded, far the higher minded, far the more unselfish of the two. There were a dozen other Home Rule members who were really more convinced of the right policy to adopt against the anti-Irish element of the Empire than Mr. Parnell. There were Gray, Sullivan, O'Connor Power, Nolan, King Harman but for the Land League, Mitchell Henry but for the same reason, Lord Francis Conyngham, J. G. MacCarthy, and others. Circumstances made Parnell a better man of action within a narrow field. It could not be helped. He got his splendid chance ; and he muffed it. We expected him to muff it. Davitt's unfriendly eye had probed him as quickly as we. Biggar saw through him soon after pinning his whole faith upon him. Fate was really unjust to Parnell. He was never equal to his opportunity. But within the narrower field, he was the finest fighting comrade which a fighting man could have. And what may be called some of his defects fitted him to do what abler men, and more generous talents, were disqualified from attempting.

Defects made both Biggar and Parnell fit for work which other men had shirked. Biggar and Parnell were not the only men whom I had sought to enlist in the larger policy. My solicitations on behalf of vigorous participation in the protection of Indian native interests, for example, had only gained me the nickname of ' Baroda,' in reference to an incident in that Indian state. Men who avowed their belief in my views refused to face the criticism of English opinion which would be, they held, counter-balanced by no rising of Irish opinion in their favour. I thought otherwise. I was certain that the Irish would back a fighting policy ; as they did, as soon as they saw it at work. Perhaps if Parnell had been a prosperous and self-satisfied young aristocrat, or if Biggar had been no misshapen figure of a man, they would have been content to serve Ireland without the risk of furious obloquy in England and faint praise in Ireland. Here is where what I call their defects

became invaluable to me. I have mentioned already that Parnell was at once a fanatic of the honour and dignity of his family and a thorough malcontent among the social class to which he belonged. Perhaps his rustication from Cambridge deepened the sense of inferior treatment. Certainly his straitened circumstances increased his sort of outlawry from the usual class of county gentlemen and deputy-lieutenants. It plainly stung his pride to have to live in furnished apartments in a poor lodging-house in Bloomsbury. He was intensely proud of his race. It may be very nearly said that for him the history of Ireland began with the Volunteer battalions in which Parnells commanded in 1782 and with the fame of Sir John Parnell in the Irish Parliament. I like all that sort of spirit. I liked it especially in Parnell's case. I wanted men of courage who would put their courage to the test in face of the frowns and insults of a hostile world. The world was already an unfriend in Parnell's view, since the Parnells were esteemed far below their merits; and in his family pride he possessed the reserve of power and the incitement to distinction, which was to carry him to a bold and overbearing ambition. There is no revolutionist like a malcontent aristocrat. I found it more than easy to show to such a spirit that to walk in the ways of the Parnells of the Irish Parliament for the restoration of the Irish Parliament, by a new and unconventional road, was just the conformity with the family tradition and just the defiance of a scornful society which appealed to his resentful and haughty nature. His occasional insolence to humble colleagues, to the 'gutter-sparrows,' as he brutally called them in an hour of fury, was rooted in just the pride which made him my first fighting man. Of course he did not fight for me, but for the Ireland of the great Parnells. I did not care very much why he fought, so long as the new policy had his service.

When Louis XIV met the request of young Prince Eugène of Savoy to be admitted into the French Army with a brutal remark that his puny frame better fitted him for the tonsure of the Church, he supplied, we know, the

stimulus which raised the young postulant to the highest rank among military commanders and broke the greatness of Louis and France at Blenheim. The slings and arrows of well-formed insolence has turned many a crookback into a hero. A back more crooked than the Belfast provision merchant carried would be difficult to find; but in that twisted form there was courage of steel and the resolve to conquer contumely. Biggar had already shown his resolution, before I met him, to prove that his deformity did not prevent him from becoming a leader of many men. He had won his way into Parliament. He was a member of the Supreme Council of the Fenian Brotherhood. He loved Ireland and he detested the Government of England. He welcomed the opportunity of proving, on the most conspicuous stage of the world, that Joseph Gillies Biggar could block the Bills of railway and shipping directors, and trample on the motions of coercionists and Carlton clubmen. He had heard too much contumely, since first the street small-boys jeered his humpback, for him to mind being pictured among Irish swine by delicate artists of *Punch* and its colleagues. With the winning of Biggar, I had the two men who were absolutely indispensable for launching the venture and giving the example. Biggar, in fact, understood what could be done sooner than Parnell; but his crookback could never hope to lead in Irish eyes the chivalric figure of the handsome master of insolvent Avondale. Yet Crookback was the better Irishman.

But I had another recruit to find—in some important respects the most indispensable find of all. What were great deeds even, without publicity, when I was aiming for the popular imagination and enthusiasm? Without a newspaper press, I had to find an exponent, a speaking trumpet, in the press. Without a party, I had to find a channel to the nation. Having to do much, and at the beginning most, of our work after midnight—when the Parliamentary Press Gallery had little attention for unimportant crotchetsmongers—I had to win an ally in that gallery who would recommend our efforts, extol our courage,

glorify our endurance, and in this manner excite the sympathy, the admiration, the enthusiasm of millions of Irishmen. Without the enthusiasm of those millions the new policy could not live a month. Yet there did not appear to be any way to have our fight reported for the public reading, and there was every danger that the authorities of the Irish party—the senior men who were afterwards repelled or alarmed by our action—would, as they tried to do too late, stifle our voice by prohibiting favourable notice in the party newspapers. There was the *Freeman's Journal* above all, circulating in every quarter of Ireland; its proprietor, Mr. Edmund Dwyer Gray, was certain to follow the suggestions of Mr. Butt; and how could I be satisfied that Mr. Butt would tolerate our novel and menacing proceedings? As a matter of fact, he was induced to censure us very severely indeed. I felt sure that *if* Ireland only knew what we were doing, we should have the Nationalist masses to a man; but *if* Ireland were not allowed to know?

An accident, a very human accident, gave me the man and the organ I wanted. My mother, residing in London, had noticed the extremely pretty children of a very pretty young Irish lady. The children were invited to tea and cakes. The pretty young Irish lady was the wife of Mr. Adam Kernahan, London editor of the *Freeman's Journal*. I accompanied my mother to Mrs. Kernahan's house, where I met her husband. He was a small, bright, intensely alive, very able Ulster Presbyterian, introduced by the late Sir John Gray, to whom he was much attached, into his important post at London. I knew that Sir John liked me, and I found that he had spoken of me to Kernahan in the friendliest terms. Kernahan was a good hater of meanness, and he thought that my unjust unseating for Galway was the depth of meanness. Though professedly non-partisan, Kernahan also was profoundly irritated at the supercilious tone of English opinion, as represented in Parliament, towards Ireland and the Irish. This Ulster Presbyterian, like many another, from the men of '98 to

the men of '48, was an Irishman first. I told him a part of our scheme. He liked Crookback Biggar. He vowed that we should have fair play 'though he got the sack over it.' I begged him to be cautious and secret. 'Trust an Ulsterman,' he said, 'they will find out too late.' He was better than his word. Under the guise of faithful reporting he brought forward every good point on our side. With diabolical ingenuity he gave the utmost prominence to every abusive epithet or angry denunciation which fell on us from the English side. When we were denounced for rebellious motives, sympathy with treason, he sent the denunciations hot-and-hot to the Irish readers from Fair Head to Cape Clear and from Howth to Connamara. On the night and day of the twenty-six hours' sitting he was as tireless in the Press Gallery as we were in the lobbies. The report of the battle of 'seven Irishmen against seven hundred Englishmen' was many columns long. It swept through Ireland like a flame of fire. Unmentioned by the patriot scribes who have written up the Parnell legend, it was Adam Kernahan, the Ulster Presbyterian journalist, who made the success of the active policy. In later years, if I mistake not, Mr. Kernahan, like hundreds of thousands of other Irishmen, was mortally alienated from Home Rule by the Land League. He quitted the *Freeman's Journal* and became London correspondent of the *Dublin Daily Express*.

I may be asked to explain how long was the active section—called the obstructionist section—of the Irish party bound by the principle which discountenanced every recourse to the Union Parliament in all matters where graver Irish interests were involved. I can reply that this maxim has never ceased to be accepted and believed by the majority of the Nationalists who accepted the active policy at the outset. It would, indeed, be a strange incongruity for the same party which repudiated all legal or constitutional rights of legislation over Ireland on the part of the Union Parliament, nevertheless to appeal to that Parliament to deal with important Irish questions. On the other hand,

it must be admitted that Mr. Parnell himself adopted the attitude of practically acknowledging the Imperial Parliament as soon almost as he felt that popular forces were mustering at his back. I heard him, before the year 1878 was at an end, boasting of having 'influenced the Government'—the Disraeli Government—to introduce the recent measure on intermediate education in Ireland! The boast produced some angry contradictions; and cries, 'It was Butt got the Bill,' showed that there was opposition to his statement. It was actually the clergy who got the Bill. A little later we shall find Mr. Parnell in the regular habit of assuring the Irish people that he had wrung this, that, and the other 'concession' from the Sassenach usurpation. I can only reply that Mr. Parnell, who only half understood the active policy at any time, practically abandoned it altogether from the time that he was released from Kilmainham after previously writing and signing a promise to support Liberal principles in Ireland. I was not concerned, however, between 1873 and 1880, in speculating upon the future possibilities of conduct on the part of my allies and assistants. Just then, in Messrs. Biggar and Parnell, I had found two men of the fearless type: one a fiery spirit spurred on to exertion by the sense of personal blemish, gallantly borne; and the other, a malcontent patrician, inspired by pride of race and the sting of difficult circumstances; both, perhaps, slightly Catilinarian in their disposition to right the world; and both full of what they probably took for love of Ireland—and which was love for Ireland, though not the same. What made them more valuable still, and in fact completed their merit, was, that neither the one nor the other at the outset could move an inch without my guidance nor utter a criticism without my inspiration. The combination of such personal courage, burning desire to shine, and abysmal ignorance and inexperience was beyond price for what I had in view. I have had the handling of many men in the course of a long political life, but I have never had in hand better material for the work before us than Joseph Gillies Biggar and Charles Stewart Parnell.

I may again be asked to explain or to mention the particular combination of policy which I drew from the aggregate of fundamental maxims or principles of the active policy which I have given a few pages before. I do not feel obliged to do anything of the kind. Very slight consideration is sufficient to reveal to anybody with eyes that behind and informing those maxims of policy there is, writ large, this declaration: 'England has no rights whatever over Ireland; but Ireland, pending justice, has entire rights over England and throughout the Empire; and in the Empire itself other nations have rights as sacred as the English or the Irish.' As in mathematics, so in the politics with which I had to deal, the permutations and combinations extractable from the fourteen propositions might be described as infinite. For instance, to take a minor, and yet not minor, matter. When the Fourteen Principles are understood, it is easy to read: (1) the spending of Government time is an object; (2) Irish intervention may spend Government time; (3) but English intervention may be just as time-spending and a great deal more difficult to check: therefore, *always give way to an English or Scots member who has anything to say which the Government wishes unsaid*. Innumerable debates and delays of the most annoying kind to the Government, and most delightful to us, were thus being perpetually started by Englishmen with grievances or ambitions to shine, and were supported by us, to the maddening exasperation of the front benches and the whips. I remember overhearing a most respected and amiable chief whip saying to his official brother, 'Damn the fools—the miserable, gabbling idiots! Why cannot they keep their mouths shut? It is our own asses who are keeping the ball going.' We used regularly to study the order book for British grievances in charge of British members; and many and many an excellent man, who never would have had a chance of ventilating something which was agitating the great heart of Clackmannan or Coventry, was enabled to secure a goodly slice of . . . Government time by the friendly support of the unselfish

members for Cavan, Meath, and Dungarvan. On the greatest and worthiest questions, too ; questions of supreme morality and human worth ; we helped a score of times to hold the fort. What would have become of abolition of flogging in the Army if Parnell and I had not been there 'to keep the ball going' with 160 to 170 speeches apiece ? Take agricultural labour in England. Take the housing of the poor. Take, again, the question of international difficulties : a single imprudent observation can often drive the Foreign Office to fits. Take India : an Indian debate will ring from Kashmir to Komorin. Under the system of parliamentary and party government the very possibility of government depends on routine, on suppression of independence, on avoiding great rights and great wrongs, on discouraging all discussion and all initiative which have not been duly censored, emasculated, and unmanned by the judicious pruning implements of the two front benches. Talk of the bogey of obstruction ! Parliamentary government can only exist by constant, unsleeping, untiring *official* obstruction of everything great and moving and nation-shaking, English still more than Irish. When the two front benches cried out against Irish obstruction, they meant that the Irishmen were letting loose flood-tides of unremedied wrongs, which the smug traditions of party government had tabooed, and would taboo, if possible, for ages and ages. Of course, a parcel of taproom politicians, a pack of hedge orators, cannot do what I did. These things want information and knowledge. Biggar and Parnell were no more, though infinitely better, than hedge orators, when I recruited them. The excellent Biggar—pluck to the backbone—could just read a dozen pages of Blue-book by way of diverting debate. The Dillons and Healys, later still, could move the adjournment or the report of progress. It is easy to closure that sort of infantilism. *Nothing can ever closure omniscience*, to which every subject, every department, every nationality, is equally well known.

There is another point of singular importance, which has been as unsuspected as others which I mention and

may mention. Does the gentle reader understand, and does he rightly appreciate the discovery, that, in the phrase of Venetian history, I had set up a lion's mouth in the Imperial House of Commons? As soon as it was thoroughly understood throughout England that there existed a body of members of Parliament who respected no official cautions or restraints, and who did not refuse to handle a subject because it was distasteful to both the front benches, we received complaints, information, suggestions for the exposure of grievances, the details of cases of injustice, corrections of official misstatements; in fine, a whole arsenal of precious material for rendering miserable three-fourths of the authorities of the public departments. If we had an Irish party, organised on a basis of education and intelligence, adequately divided into committees for dealing with different branches of the Government, there is literally no point of the estimates, no detail of the administration, which could not be annotated copiously and convincingly with the aid of English materials supplied by every county and town in England. I do not say that the improvement would be pleasing to the Government; but the pleasure of the Government was hardly our first consideration. It would be impossible to make much use of the bogey of obstruction in face of that laudable anxiety for the satisfaction of English public and private opinions. From the errors of the unpaid magisterial bench to the indelicate proceedings of local financial authorities, there was nothing not deserving of examination, and nothing in which English opinion could be more pleased than by such examination. If the Government took the responsibility of silencing the complaint of the British taxpayer, so much the worse for the Government. It was certainly not the front benches, nor the menace of the closure, which interfered with these valuable developments of British interest in Parliament. It was purely and entirely the incapacity of what we used to call the Dublin rings, which turned into empty talk or hysterical postures the simple and satisfactory programme of general intervention.

As an illustration of the efficient assistance rendered on many occasions by our anonymous partners among the British public, I would describe briefly what happened once on the question of the condemnation to death of Arabi Pasha after the surprise of the Egyptian national army at Tel-el-Kebir. The damning, the crushing, charge against the Egyptian leader was that he made felonious use of the white flag at Alexandria to deceive the British forces into the belief that he was surrendering fortifications and army, when in reality he used the suspension of hostilities produced by his hoisting the emblem of truce in order to withdraw his guns and regiments for a more extended resistance. A large number of Liberals had raised a debate on the question of a commutation of the sentence of death passed by the court-martial. Mr. Gladstone was superbly indignant in his denunciation of the treacherous barbarism of that misuse of the sacred symbol of peace and honour. There could be no pardon for the abandoned trickster who had violated the most sacred obligation of the true soldier. Our plea for mercy was sternly rejected. The very next morning I received an anonymous letter on Arabi and his doom.

DEAR SIR,

Being aware that you have the courage to look our Grand Old Man in the face, I beg of you to consult Wolseley's 'Soldier's Pocket-book' on the use of Flags of Truce for the purpose of misleading the enemy. It is possible that in his study of military law Mr. Gladstone has allowed this testimony to escape his attention.

Yours faithfully,

A POLITICAL OPPONENT.

I rushed immediately to Clowes, the military book-seller, and provided myself with the valuable repertory on military conduct by the distinguished general. It was certainly worth its price . . . to Arabi Pasha. Under the heading of Flags of Truce, there it was laid down that a sapient commander might get a good deal of use out of flags of truce, if he knew how. He might get time to

repair a damaged fortification. He might get valuable information. He might withdraw his troops from untenable positions. Why, Arabi Pasha's lawyer must have preinspired Sir Garnet Wolseley. I drew up a question at once for Mr. Gladstone.

To ask the Prime Minister, if, in view of his declaration of the unpardonable heinousness of the use of a flag of truce by Arabi Pasha in order to withdraw his troops and guns from Alexandria, he will immediately take steps to prohibit the circulation in the British Army of the work by Sir Garnet Wolseley, entitled the 'Soldier's Pocket-book,' in which this deplorable practice employed by Arabi Pasha is recommended for use by the British Army.

The question did not appear at once on the Orders of the House of Commons. But I received a communication from the Premier requesting some delay, and a note from the Clerk of the House suggesting that I should make certain amendments in my inquiry in order to satisfy the rules and customs by ancient wisdom made and provided. I never put that question to Mr. Gladstone. Within a couple of days it was announced that the death sentence on Arabi Pasha had been commuted into exile from Egypt. I was a merciful man. I never raised in the House the subject of premiers and pocket-books. I feel I ought to have made more use of my reticence. Many a man has entered the gilded chamber for helping his Prime Minister out of a smaller hole than that. Of course, though, it was my 'political opponent' who ought to have got the cake. Perhaps he did.

I am certain that the true meaning of the historical narrative I am writing will be better understood by these illustrations of what the active policy did, and was capable of doing. Let nobody suppose that the Land League items, or the subsequent items which compose the tail of the eloquent Mr. John Redmond, represent, even distantly, the potentialities of the great policy. Let me only say, before concluding this chapter, that an essential element of my policy was what Mr. Baker Greene, being a counsel learned

in the law, called 'Putting the party to his election,' and which I have been accustomed to entitle, 'Giving the Government the disadvantage of the alternative.' I am not going to explain this completely, because it would take much explanation, as well as for other reasons. I may say, and I ought to say, this much. Every point of the active policy had two issues: the one we suggested or I suggested, and the one which ensued from the Government's going its own wilful way. If England as represented by the front bench would not restore the Irish Parliament, recast or introduce an Imperial Council fairly representative of the nations in the Empire, and thus retain the freedom and ancient powers of its own English Parliament; then there was an alternative. The English Parliament would be degraded to a Corps Législatif, gagged by closures, constipated with red tape, reduced to a mere ministerial voting machine, and gradually losing every vestige of the popular and Imperial prestige and authority which are indispensable to the Imperial Government. If the English would not restore our Parliament, certainly they should not have theirs. We could, at all events, make it something else. Or again, suppose I wanted reform in the treatment of any other nationality; if it was refused, the refusal would only result in the transformation, or development, of the institutions which I had established for the cultivation of a National-Imperial spirit and capacity, into institutions for the cultivation of a National spirit and capacity, without so much of the Imperial. There was always the alternative. By keeping the idea of the alternative clearly realised, one is able to appreciate apparent repulse as well as evident success. The Irish landlords refused to join in the summoning of the Irish Parliament which guaranteed their property and would have restored their popularity. Alternative: the Birrell Bill. I apologise for being slightly cryptic. But I only undertook to reveal the history of the active policy in the Irish Parliamentary party.

CHAPTER VIII

THE SESSION OF 1877—MY RETURN TO PARLIAMENT—THE TWENTY-SIX HOURS' SITTING—MY TREATY WITH PRESI- DENT KRUGER

Why £500 to Biggar and Parnell?—Mr. Sheridan Knowles coaches Parnell—Dungarvan—Ridiculous Necessity of Obstruction—South Africa Bill—My Talks with President Kruger—Mr. Biggar and Mr. Chaplin—Encouraging Mr. Courtney.

As I paid more than £500 to Messrs. Biggar and Parnell in the years 1876, 1877, and 1878, and as the most of the money was paid in cheques on the Temple Bar Branch of the London and Westminster Bank, I wrote recently to the manager of the branch if he could most kindly furnish me with the details out of his archives. Most courteously the manager replied by sending me the desired details in the following letter :—

LONDON AND WESTMINSTER BANK, LIMITED,
TEMPLE BAR BRANCH, 217 STRAND, W.C. :
July 30, 1909.

DEAR SIR,

I beg to acknowledge the receipt of your favour of the 28th inst.

I have pleasure in sending herewith a list of the payments made on your behalf to the late Mr. C. S. Parnell, M.P., and Mr. J. G. Biggar, M.P., between the years 1876 and 1878.

DATE		PAYEE	£	s.	d.
1876					
Apl.	20	Parnell	34	3	8
Oct.	17	Biggar	33	6	8
Nov.	18	Parnell	35	0	0
1877					
Apl.	19	Biggar	33	6	8
Apl.	20	Parnell	35	16	8

DATE	PAYEE		£	s.	d.
1877					
May 4	Biggar	. . . . .	50	0	0
Jly. 9	Parnell	. . . . .	50	0	0
Aug. 15	Parnell	. . . . .	50	0	0
1878					
Jan. 18	Biggar	. . . . .	33	13	4
Jan. 19	Parnell	. . . . .	36	4	0
Oct. 19	Parnell	. . . . .	38	6	8

I am, dear Sir,

Yours faithfully,

A. P. CLARKE,

Manager.

F. HUGH O'DONNELL, Esq.

According, then, to the books of the London and Westminster Bank, I paid to Messrs. J. G. Biggar and C. S. Parnell, through the Temple Bar Branch, the total sum of £429 17s. 8d., being £279 11s. to Mr. C. S. Parnell and £150 6s. 8d. to Mr J. G. Biggar. I paid them something like £120 in the same years from time to time; but that was always in small sums, notes and gold, being part of a joint contribution on our part towards the expenses of meetings, demonstrations, &c., in which we were jointly interested. Biggar and Parnell paid their share as well. I remember there was an amnesty demonstration in Hyde Park, that had left a very considerable deficit, which we shared between us. There were many years in which I spent from £300 to £400 in connexion with the meetings, printing expenses, of the Home Rule Confederation. Very often, when I went to an important and influential meeting in the provinces, often in some city town-hall, I gave from £5 to £10 towards the costs of the meeting. Sometimes I paid the whole of the costs, in a poor neighbourhood, where the Irish residents were poorly paid working-men, who could never have paid for the meeting hall and printing, advertising, &c., but who formed a splendid display of earnest manhood, whom it was a pleasure and a pride to address. I remember once handing over the whole of my receipts for a year as London correspondent of the *Bombay Gazette*

in order to pay the missing part of a secretary's salary, who himself had emptied his own scanty purse in helping the cause. The cost of fighting the British Empire often came very heavily on us poor and unendowed persons. But it was a glorious time. 'God save Ireland!'

The quest for information will naturally lead the reader to inquire why, on earth, I paid over £400 to Messrs. Biggar and Parnell through the London and Westminster Bank during the years 1876, 1877, and 1878. And apparently in instalments with interest also? Perfectly true. I was not paying, but repaying. Messrs. Biggar and Parnell had lent me £400 at the commencement of 1876, and I repaid them the whole of the money, together with interest at five per cent., during the two and a half years which followed. But why, why did these gentlemen lend me £400 at the start of 1876? Quite simply. They could not possibly make any headway with the active policy in the House of Commons in the absence of their teacher and trainer, guide, philosopher and chief. It was no use my mere explaining to them in my quiet library in Serjeants' Inn how they could open a new battery against the enemy every day of the parliamentary week and every hour of the parliamentary day. They could change from home affairs to colonial affairs, and from the condition of the people to the war-cloud in the Balkans, cheerfully chivying the Home Secretary after the Board of Works, and the gentleman in charge of the diplomatic vote after the gentleman who managed the Army or the Navy. 'But we can't change like that,' they feelingly observed. 'You are writing leading articles all your time about that sort of stuff. We are not, and we are not likely to. You simply must come into Parliament, and show us how to practise what you preach.' Thereupon, I still more feelingly observed that I was yet paying off, slowly and stubbornly, my worst debts, which had been piled upon me by the selected judge, who had crushed me under the weight of two contested elections rendered useless and vain, and the costs of the election petition into the bargain. The dear old thing in a wig had meant to ruin

me, and I was ruined. I told them how Mr. Butt had asked me if I would like to stand for that very vacancy in Meath after John Martin's death for which Parnell was returned to Parliament, and how I told Butt that I had a mountain of election debts and costs on my shoulders, and could not lift my head for years. I told them it might take three years before I could be a free man again. One day, and several days afterwards, they asked more questions—business questions; from which they concluded that, if I paid off certain debts at once, the rest could wait or be settled from time to time. Biggar calculated that if I got £400 and laid it out in extinction of the worst claims, I need not wait three years anyhow. A month or two afterwards, they said that they had £400 at my disposal, and they would be easy creditors; but I must, without a moment's delay, join them in the House of Commons. They wanted to advance the money without interest, but I said that they must accept the scriptural rate of 5 per cent. It would bring a blessing on the work. So I came into the debt of my troops; and, editors developing a laudable appreciation of my articles, I paid them back without any difficulty; so that, in the spring of 1877, I felt that my exile from the Parliament which was waiting to appreciate me might be terminated as soon as it liked.

By the way, I am perfectly certain that Mr. Joseph Gillies Biggar tore up some of my cheques instead of presenting them for payment. He lent me £200 equally with Parnell, and I know that he did not draw the whole of the money. I am the reverse of a good man of business, and if the London and Westminster Bank did not keep its accounts better than I have sometimes kept mine, an interesting page of reminiscences would be wanting to this continuation of Thucydides. My apprentices felt that they could not even apply the lessons of the master without his personal presence and direction. They helped to quicken my appearance or return upon that scene where—as I had been the first to teach—the intervention of Irish members in English affairs could bring home the importance of Home

Rule to every statesman in England. Why? They were neither kinsmen nor comrades of mine. There were a hundred would-be parliamentarians who were infinitely closer and nearer to them in every respect than I. Except in relation to his labours for my policy, Mr. Biggar was a total stranger to me, and I to him. I knew absolutely nothing, and cared less, about Mr. Parnell, before I recruited the well-born malcontent for my views, and for my views only. Outside of the furtherance of my policy, it was impossible for me even to have an enjoyable conversation with either of them or with both. Any patriotic ham-and-bacon merchant could discuss Greece and Rome, the French Salon or the British Academy, the Renascence and the Revolution, the tragic muse of Dante or the *voix d'or* of Sarah Bernhardt, quite as delicately and as eruditely as the excellent Biggar; and Parnell's accomplishments were not one whit less than the solid tastes of Mr. Biggar. I lived, on the contrary, with the finest flower of the intellectuality of three capitals. In the editorial room of the *Spectator* there came, besides R. H. Hutton himself and Meredith Townsend, Walter Bagehot, Sir Robert Giffen, as he is now, the lights of the philosophical societies, Mr. George Hooper, the eminent historian of famous campaigns, literary critics, distinguished economists. And there were other literary saloons, and other intellects—Cardinal Manning, Father Dalgairns, G. E. Ranken. I was the colleague of dozens of the Catholic writers and scholars of France and Belgium. What on earth, outside of the policy, had I to do with an unlettered squireling and a rugged provincial tradesman? Why should they open their fat or exiguous purses to me? What was Hecuba to them, or they to Hecuba? I wanted apprentices. They wanted constant instruction and guidance. I wanted men of steadfast courage who would face fire without flinching, and help me to make the stubborn fight that was the spectacular attraction upon which I counted in order to rouse the fighting spirit of the Irish Gael. I wanted, in a word, the work. Let them have the show. What is a statue in Sackville Street to me?

Between a Dublin waterworks commemoration and the pietistic version of the agitatorial agitator who disfranchised 170,000 Irish freeholders and brought forty place-hunting Papists into the alien Parliament!

I confess that in this session of 1877, when looking out upon the troubled and tempestuous horizons of contemporary Europe, with massacre and war flinging into deadly hand-grips great and fierce states and races, I often found it difficult to avoid open laughter at the noble army of a ham-and-bacon provider and a rusticated undergraduate which I was leading against the British Constitution. As I could not help blurting out in the course of the twenty-six hours' sitting, I felt myself at times 'in a ridiculous position.' It *was* ridiculous. While famine and disaster were afflicting the life of India, while Mr. Gladstone was extending his crusade against the Bulgarian atrocities, while Turk and Russ were savagely grappling in the Shipka Pass, the breaches of Plevna, and the gorges of Armenia, I was drilling my legion of two for the deplorable fracture of the mirror of Parliaments. Yet such things do happen. The vastest and most complicated machinery may be at the mercy of one unscrewed bolt or one lump of metal dropped in a vital section of the works. The drilling went on in redoubled earnest, and now there was a beginning of active operations. At this date I was immensely indebted to the painstaking advice of Mr. Sheridan Knowles, the parliamentary leader writer of the *Morning Post*. For very many years habituated to the procedure of the House of Commons; a perfect storehouse of anecdotes and precedents; keen, tactful, and judicious; Mr. Knowles could have relieved the Clerk of the House without the necessity of a day's notice. A warm and high-spirited Nationalist, he resented the mingled roughness and flippancy with which Irish demands were always received in Parliament. I never assumed that Mr. Knowles would go so far as I was prepared to go, but I knew that he would give inestimable help within certain limits. On being consulted, he cordially agreed that 'blocking the progress of contested measures after

midnight' was a form of retaliation which would cause intense exasperation among the sufferers, while the bulk of the House, being only indirectly menaced, would endure with much patience the inconvenience of other people. 'The veriest tyro could not make a mistake.' The assurance brought comfort and audacity to Mr. Biggar. He was not a Cicero, but he could block Bills; and soon the House was as full of lamentation as Ramah. Mr. Sheridan Knowles performed a still more distinguished service to the new policy in kindly undertaking to help Mr. Parnell on to his parliamentary legs.

It was in connexion with a Bill brought in by the Home Secretary, Mr. Cross, for the amendment and greater unification of the Civil Prison Code, that Mr. Knowles was enabled to give the benefit of his immense parliamentary experience and his humanitarian disposition. Without telling him anything of the darker and more melodramatic developments which I hoped would come to exist behind this moderate and inoffensive beginning, I asked Mr. Sheridan Knowles to draw up twenty or thirty amendments to the Prisons Bill. I destined these suggestions for Mr. Parnell. I had both the strongest reasons for fearing Mr. Parnell's breakdown over unprepared work, and a very strong expectation that if he could only feel himself once safe in the saddle, so to speak, the member for Meath would take his fences with increasing facility and ease. On the previous year Mr. Parnell had shied and balked very badly in a matter which should have brought much kudos to me. I had written for the *Spectator*—having previously offered it to the *Morning Post*—an article in great detail on information sent me by my Vienna correspondent, an Austrian gentleman who sent me most things of interest not contrary to Austro-Hungarian policy. This article was, as acknowledged by Mr. Gladstone in the *Contemporary Review* of September 1876, weeks ahead of the rest of the press and the English Government. I had asked Mr. Parnell, accordingly, on June 3—the date of its publication—to question the Foreign Office about its revelations.

He did not, and he frankly told me that he found himself embarrassed by a matter to which he was entirely new. Only two years before this time, Mr. T. W. Russell, the Liberal minister, is quoted by Parnell's indiscriminate panegyrist, Mr. R. Barry O'Brien, as saying: 'I was struck by what I thought Parnell's extraordinary political ignorance and incapacity. He knew nothing, and I thought he would never do anything.' I had formed a far higher estimate of him. He struck me as one of these able men who cannot speak unless they have pegs on which to hang their sentences, who must start at least in a sort of go-cart to keep them right till they get accustomed. In the quiet library chair in Serjeants' Inn he was a fluent and acute speaker and reasoner. In supplying him with what amounted to a short guide to the places of interest in the Prisons Bill, I strongly surmised that he would turn out a good pupil of Mr. Sheridan Knowles's amendments. At the same time, I got from my old editor, Mr. Fox Bourne, warm letters of recommendation of him to Mr. Hopwood, M.P. for Stockport, Mr. Rylands, M.P. for Burnley, Mr. Taylor, M.P. for Leicester, and some other humanitarian Liberals. As everybody knows now, Parnell behaved splendidly on the Prisons Bill, proposing valuable amendments in favour of prison reform, and at the same time elaborating and multiplying his intervention so as to make the Prisons Bill debates a fertile occasion for charges of deliberate obstruction. Mr. Biggar blocked Bills with serene attention to the high moral duty of passing laws only when the country could know what was occurring, a thing that could not be said of business done after midnight. Mr. Biggar's conscientious objections to nocturnal law-making were further justified at this time by a motion by Mr. Hanbury asking for an official report of speeches, on the avowed ground that the newspapers reported nothing after half-past twelve. The Union Parliament was already congested, and over-congested, by the attempt to govern about ten times as much country and as many people as it had any idea whatever about. 'Home Rule' was Mr. Butt's

remedy. 'Scamp the work' remained the pure essence of Unionist statesmanship.

Probably all this attention to the shortcomings of over-centralised government contributed to add the votes of half a dozen English members to the usual minority in support of Mr. Butt's Home Rule motion, which was moved this year by Mr. Shaw, M.P. for County Cork, who subsequently succeeded Mr. Butt in the chairmanship of the party. A far more important accession to the Irish side happened on the discussion of Mr. O'Connor Power's motion for the release of the Fenian prisoners, when language strongly in favour of the demand was used by Mr. Gladstone, though the distinguished statesman declined to go into the lobby against the responsible Government. We felt that the prison doors must shortly be opened. Within the next few months, indeed, all the political convicts were released, and that cruelty was lifted from the Irish heart. Unfortunately the treatment of soldiers of freedom as the degraded companions in penal shame and toil of the burglars, ravishers, and forgers, left behind a sting of insult and a call for revenge which were to lead to sad and terrible events.

Meantime the death of Mr. O'Keefe, M.P. for Dungarvan, left a vacancy for which I presented myself. I was now sufficiently free from my Galway election debts to be able to face a contest, and the additional assurance of Mr. Shaw, M.P., that I could have a loan of £100 if I wanted, 'and to pay back as I found convenient,' was a pleasant, though unnecessary, encouragement. Mr. Shaw had headed the list of subscriptions at the Home Rule Conference of 1873, of which he was chairman, with the generous contribution of £300. An admirable speaker, full of grave humour, full of consideration for all the shades of opinion in the party, he seemed the very man we required, in case of anything happening to Mr. Butt. It was whispered among some who knew Mr. Butt best that his health was getting far from strong, and that, though at his best he was still at his best, fatigue, and drowsiness without fatigue, rendered him

much less capable of exhausting discussion and management. He lived for less than three years longer. To Dungarvan I was accompanied by the warmest support of the Home Rule Confederation, and by the approval of Mr. Butt. At Dungarvan I found myself opposed by Mr. Henry Matthews, since Home Secretary and raised to the peerage as Lord Llandaff, who had been already M.P. for the borough, who still possessed a strong following, and who proved a most formidable, able, and courteous opponent. I beat him by a few votes, and at once returned to Parliament to operate the active policy with my own hand.

England was full of the heralds of coming change. While the Home Rule party appealed, not in vain, for support in measures extending the franchise in Ireland, the same question on a larger scale was exciting enthusiasm or alarm in the two constitutional camps. Mr. G. O. Trevelyan's motion for household suffrage in the counties roused the whole mass of the English agricultural labourers to vast demonstrations in its favour. But the shadow of the great war in the Near East was thrown upon the entire session, and in the nervous feeling produced by the Russian victories, the position of the Conservative Government as almost professional defenders of the security of the Empire appeared to be much fortified in public opinion. Among English as well as Irish Catholics a rumour, which proved to be substantially true, that Mr. Gladstone had congratulated the Italian Government upon a draconian code against the clergy, tended to place powerful influences in opposition to the Liberals, as former followers of the anti-clerical pamphleteer. The policy of revolting cruelty and brutality which the Russian masters of Poland were employing towards large sections of the Uniate Catholics, and the compulsory enrolment, under whip and prison, of no less than 50,000 Catholics as nominal members of the Russian Church, caused an angry desire to thwart the Tsar in Turkey to be very prevalent among the British and Irish co-religionists of the persecuted victims. It was a grave and passionate period of history.

Looking about me very deliberately, I came to the conclusion that the Bill for the Confederation of the British Colonies in South Africa might afford an admirable ground both for that appeal to Irish sentiment which we had long contemplated, and for ulterior developments which, as a matter of fact, showed themselves within a very few years. The fight on the South Africa Bill was to be remarkable, we vowed; though we hardly realised that our scheme would quite result in such an unsurpassable victory for the new policy. That result, however, really was not our achievement. It was the achievement of the magnificent system of advertisement which Mr. Adam Kernahan, as I have already indicated, maintained in our behalf. Thanks to Mr. Adam Kernahan, we did not waste our sweetness on the desert air, even in the loneliest hours of night at Westminster. On the contrary.

I was about to write 'once for all I must protest against the idea that we expected to stop Parliament.' I know very well that I shall have to protest a great many times in the course of this narrative against our being thought to have held any idea so profoundly ridiculous. Since we got the nickname of obstructionists, must we not have believed in our power to obstruct and must we not have aimed at a complete stoppage of legislation as the realisation of an ideal? The authorised exponents of subsequent Parnellism, have they not also avowed that Parnell obstructed in order to obstruct? I read a statement in one of Mr. Justin McCarthy's panegyrics of what he never understood, that Parnell's rule was simply this: 'If there was not Irish legislation, then there should be no English legislation'; and the head of the McCarthyites against the Parnellites sagely approved the absurd theory. Mr. John Dillon also has got a little niche of Irish immortality for his prophecy and appeal: 'Give Mr. Parnell thirty good men and he will stop the British Parliament.' Yet Parnell himself never professed any such folly. I have heard him profess his desire to make matters 'disagreeable for those English fellows,' 'as disagreeable as we possibly can.' I have

heard him express his desire 'to punish' the English. I cannot recall that at any time, before the silliest crowd of his worshippers, he ever promised to stop the English Parliament. Certainly we did not expect to stop the Bill for South Africa Confederation in 1877. Did the English assailants of our action, from the *Times* down to the humblest minnow of the press, ever ask themselves these simple questions? Is this part of a policy to recommend or advertise some policy? Is this part of a policy to intervene in the central administration of the Empire? Is this part of a policy of appealing to subject nations which had hitherto no voice in the central Parliament? Is this policy part of a scheme of co-operation with the Boer Republicans, for example, whose recent annexation by Lord Carnarvon and Sir Theophilus Shepstone had just been generally acclaimed by the London press as equally final and satisfactory?

Let me at once do violence to our shrinking delicacy and admit that advertisement had something to do with our disagreeable proceedings on the South Africa Bill. Why else did I rejoice so greatly at the promise of the London editor of the *Freeman's Journal*? One does not usually go to the organs of the press for six columns of publicity through any over-accentuated desire to escape notice. Let the most statesmanlike English reader calmly realise in his own mind and imagination what the spectacle which we were about to inaugurate meant to the average Nationalist multitude or individuals in Ireland. From time immemorial Ireland had been unable even to plant a retaliatory blow of any kind in reply to the policy of our foreign lords and masters. If we organised monster meetings, they were suppressed. If our combatant editors, a John Mitchell, a John O'Leary, or Charles Kickham, indulged in observations eminently unflattering to the law established, there was suppression, and transportation and convict labour. Suddenly all the old Fenians and the young Fenians from Waterford to Donegal could enjoy the wondrous sight of men of their own race and opinions using words and

actions in the Imperial Parliament itself, to the representatives of Imperial power and administration themselves, which had the result of provoking at once an exhibition of fury and impotence on the part of all those high and mighty enemies, which was purely diverting. When I secured the reporting and describing faculties and powers of Mr. Adam Kernahan, I had enough imagination to see beforehand the crowds which would block Prince's Street and Sackville Street for a hundred yards round the offices of his important journal; the rush of traders, and shopkeepers, and shop assistants, and private persons of all kinds, out of all shop doors and private doors through a thousand towns and villages; as the newsboys went shouting: 'Great scenes in Parliament'; 'All Night Debating'; 'Seven Irishmen agin the English'; 'The Speaker in a Fit.' It was comic. It was most tragic. Parliament, the Englishmen's Parliament, had been such an exclusive circle of ascendancy and authority; and now a couple of Irishmen were denying its intelligence and flouting its indignation. 'Begorra!' said the quay labourer, 'they're makin' a door-mat of it.' And yet the wise London press thought we meant mere obstruction, and gravely lamented our sub-human folly. No lapse of time, no assumption of authority, no hostility to Ireland, will ever again place the British Parliament in the position, if not of affection, at least of prestige, which it occupied twenty-four hours before the twenty-six hours' sitting. Nor were the effects confined, nor intended to be confined, to Ireland. There were to be a great many other consequences and developments, but this supreme impression that the spell had been broken remained the dominant one.

Did we mean to show that the children of a subject race, of a suppressed nationality, could intervene without reverence in the very arcana and central organisation of Empire? This consideration does not appear to have occurred, so far as I remember, to any organ of importance but the *Spectator*. I thought that Mr. R. H. Hutton was the author, but I do not know. It did not dwell so much on

the racial matter as on the interference with the gravest responsibilities of Empire by unauthorised, irresponsible, and reckless intruders. A decent criticism of the measure was no doubt justified. But there was rank hostility and open disrespect in the whole of the criticism in the present case. The questions raised about every detail and department of the Confederation which the Bill proposed to establish in South Africa, ranging from the site of the new capital to the status of the native tribes and the future of the Transvaal Colony, left untouched no possible aspect of South African Government, and constituted a deliberate attack upon the responsibility and authority of the Imperial advisers. There was a great deal more of this angry and yet weighty criticism. There was no doubt that our assault on the Bill had been much better prepared and combined than seemed to have reached the knowledge of the Cabinet. It certainly was a sustained attack upon a great administrative act of the Imperial Government, and it was an attack by men who, as a race, were excluded from the Imperial Government, and who now showed to other races, similarly outlawed, that even the peaceful resources of national resentment were far from being exhausted. One of the warmest congratulations and invitations after my election at Dungarvan had come from Mr. Carlo Biale, a retired Calcutta merchant, belonging to the ancient Genoese family of the Biali di Celli, a gentleman of influence in many parts of India. After the struggle on the South Africa Bill that invitation was repeated with a warmth which ensured my acceptance. I found around the hospitable table of my host some Indian gentlemen, residents or visitors in London. They were extraordinarily impressed by the long and unsparing criticism in Parliament of a Government measure of such importance. Among them I made the acquaintance of a Bengali gentleman of great wealth, Mr. Ganendra Mohun Tagore, who was one of the most interested of all. A few years after he joined me in founding the Constitutional Association of India. The agitation excited by the twenty-six hours' sitting went extending in widening circles for

years, and nothing which occurred in Ireland in consequence approached even distantly the importance of other movements in other lands.

Was the Irish resistance to the South Africa Bill organised in any sort of connexion with the Boer Republicans, who were then protesting by arguments and were soon to protest with arms against the seizure of their State by Sir Theophilus Shepstone in the name of his Britannic Majesty? This is a question which even the *Times* forgot to put, and which, if it had been put, would have been answered in 1877 with a certain absence of apparent information such as the time and the circumstances required. Considering also that the Irishmen who pushed opposition to the very utmost were seven, no less than seven—namely, Mr. Biggar, Mr. Gray, Mr. Kirk, Captain Nolan, Mr. Parnell, Mr. Power, and Mr. O'Donnell—and considering that none but the last was entirely conversant with all the circumstances of the opposition to the Bill, it can be said that the Irish members had no connexion with the Boer Republicans beyond deep irritation at the matter and manner of the annexation. 'By Heavens!' swore Major O'Gorman, 'it's the Union, and Castlereagh, and the Yeomanry over again.' As, however, the whole of the opposition of the new party to the Bill was necessarily my province, and my province alone—neither of my active coadjutors being quite sure whether the Transvaal was a town or a mountain at the start—the arrangements I made and the alliances I formed were subject to no control. Besides, I have always found my Irish colleagues most reticent about what was never confided to them. I can now confide to the general public, in the continuation of this exact narrative, that nearly every step in opposition to the South Africa Bill of 1877, confirming and regularising the seizure of the Boer Republic in the spring of that year, was discussed and arranged with the authorised representatives of the invaded Republic, including in the first place his Excellency President Paul Kruger and the Hon. Dr. Jorissen, Attorney-General in the suppressed Boer Government. These two gentlemen had

come to England as a deputation of protest from the Transvaal. They saw the members of the British Government specially entrusted with the recent destruction of their country's independence. As Mr. James Lowther informed the House of Commons—he then discharging the office of Under-Secretary of the Colonies with the same jaunty incompetence which he soon after exhibited in the Irish Chief Secretaryship—‘The two gentlemen were received the other day by the Secretary of State; he (Mr. Lowther) was present at the interview; and, without entering into the details of the conversation, he would mention that it was at once pointed out by his noble friend that the act performed by Sir Theophilus Shepstone was irrevocable, that it would be idle to enter upon a discussion of it, that it was accomplished, and that any further discussion of it would be a waste of time.’ Can the reader imagine the air and easy grace with which that inimitable communication was made to the strong and stern President of the Boers as he bowed his massive head and clenched his firm lips? I think I may publish a very harmless note I got from the Boer Attorney-General just before our first meeting.

Dr. Jorissen has had the thoroughness of his hostility to the annexation called in question through his subsequent acceptance of a post as legal official under the British administration. I have been assured that no such interpretation can be justly placed upon his action. It was the Boer policy to keep quiet so long as the Zulu power remained at the disposal of the British representative. I found the ex-Attorney-General of the Republic thoroughly devoted to his nation and its leader. His letter speaks for itself. The date will show that I was in personal communication with the Transvaal delegates nearly a fortnight before I forced on the twenty-six hours' sitting.

ALBEMARLE HOTEL, ALBEMARLE STREET, PICCADILLY:
June 17, 1877.

SIR,

Your esteemed of the 16th is at hand; and I am honoured by the warm expressions of your sympathy. Really we are not spoiled in that way here, and I feel very happy.

Will it suit you if I call on you to-morrow morning (i.e. Wednesday) at ten o'clock?

As I have an engagement at noon, and do not know how long in the afternoon it will keep me, I can for the moment only add, that any hour convenient to you will suit me, if you will only have the kindness to appoint the time.

I have the honour to be, Sir,
Your most obedient servant,

DR. V. J. P. JORISSEN.

THE HON. F. H. O'DONNELL, M.P.,
8 Serjeants' Inn, Fleet Street, E.C.

I am not sure that I transcribe correctly the initials of Dr. Jorissen's name, and there is one word, which may be 'rather,' which I omit in the text, as I am not sure. Mr. Kruger was staying at the Albemarle with Dr. Jorissen.

I did not see the President again till, more than twenty years afterwards, I looked on his white hairs and strong, proud face; worn with age and sorrow, but for an hour illuminated with a joyous hope, as he passed in his carriage along the shouting Paris boulevard; while an enormous crowd of Frenchmen welcomed him with a delirious enthusiasm which was not worth an ounce of practical aid. In 1877 he was a mighty farmer man, tall and thick and square; with great brown fingers that opened and closed with slow might, as if throttling a great beast; the while Dr. Jorissen recounted to me the cold unapproachableness with which the English statesman had waved aside the solemn protest of the Republic. We had four meetings altogether, three at the Albemarle Hotel, and one at Serjeants' Inn on his way from some Dutch merchants in the City or at Holborn. He seemed to follow all I said with perfect comprehension, though he only used Dutch phrases to punctuate Dr. Jorissen's explanations and questions to me. Only on one occasion, when the Attorney-General was describing how the Boers found themselves taken between the British troops and power, on one side, and the savage empire of the Zulus, encouraged by England, on the other, President Kruger broke in with the words to me: 'Yes, yes, Cetewayo—Carnarvon's bully.' The compressed

wrath with which he spoke was a great thing to see. Even the light-hearted Mr. Lowther might have found food for thought. I told them that the Irish were just in their case for three-quarters of a century, that England had guaranteed our independence also, and had taken it all the same. 'Did you not fight?' Yes and no. We were so near to the centres of English power, that we were always overwhelmed before we had time to gather our strength. But we should never accept the English yoke. 'Not after seventy years?' Not after seven hundred years. The President's eyes brightened, and he laughed a short laugh. I told him that I had heard that the English were falling out with Cetewayo. 'Are you very sure?' I said that I was quite sure, because I met many distinguished Englishmen, including journalists in the confidence of both front benches, and that the Zulu power must be crushed. 'Must be crushed?' Perhaps, I said, your position would be better if the English quarrelled with the Zulus? Then the President fairly chuckled, and said something in Dutch which sounded like 'Guter Junge.' I was a good lad, he thought, to have such ideas. He made Dr. Jorissen ask me again if any great Englishmen were determined to finish with the Zulus. Certainly, certainly, I repeated. They always do that, I added quite artlessly. They did it in Ireland. They did it in India. Whenever they made use of somebody to break up somebody else, they had to break him up also as a finish. Besides, Cetewayo was really unpleasant for a peaceful government. Yes, he must be knocked on the head. I should say, very soon. The great President sat up straight on his chair, his huge hands spread on his thighs, and looked, looked, for some seconds right before him. Into the future?

I advised the President, for a special and European reason, to cultivate his Dutch kinsmen. They could influence opinion on both sides of their State, and have the facts laid before European opinion. The Bill in the House for confirming the seizure of the Transvaal would be exposed and criticised to the last line. I said that I was in

communication with correspondents at Amsterdam and in the Dutch universities. Would they, the delegates, write to tell friends of theirs in Holland to send me plenty of intelligence? 'But will good information be of any use in Parliament now?' Not now in one sense. Nothing could alter the annexation except the discovery that it cost a great deal too much to keep. But information would be useful, if it was only for future use. 'Then you do not think that our delegation can do any good here?' Nothing, I said, does good here except a fact so big that it must be seen even when the eyes are closed. If you get very strong, you will be much respected here. When we parted for the last time, the great President placed both his vast hands below and above mine, while Dr. Jorissen said: 'We thank you so much. You give good advice. Others have told us many things. You give good advice. The President thanks you. Speak for us on that Bill which is against us.'

Meantime, while the mighty farmer man was thinking of the near day when 'Carnarvon's bully'—I merely quote—would cease to please his present friends, I had received all sorts of information from the Dutch Transvaal Committee, which had for its chairman or president the Professor of International Law at the University of Utrecht. So, when I was making what they call, Connamara way, 'a holy show' of the South Africa Bill, I was meditating on other matters than mere obstruction. Referred to the test of our fundamental principles, the South Africa incident illustrated: (1) the use of our membership of the Imperial Parliament for purposes entirely independent of English Imperial rule; (2) the support of an oppressed nationality; (3) the intervention in an international affair big with international possibilities; (4) the use of Government time against the Government.

It were idle to rehearse the minutiae of the struggle. It was my firm and unalterable resolution to combine the maximum of effect with the minimum of friction, the maximum of opposition with the minimum of exasperation. I was using the forms of the House to the utmost; and

therefore the forms of the House were my peculiar consideration. I preferred the soft answer which turns away wrath to the defiance which provokes retaliation. There are distinguished men still living, and to whom I wish the longest life—I might mention Mr. A. J. Balfour and Sir Henry Lucy—who would bear emphatic testimony to the unbroken courtesy which I was careful to show to every individual. As a rule, Mr. Parnell adopted a similar bearing. Sometimes he saw an opportunity for making a demonstration for the benefit of Sackville Street, when I thought only of the business before us. Sometimes he undertook this attitude in alleged defence of me, which I found trying. Thus, on an occasion when I was skating on particularly thin ice, I ruffled the dignified patriotism of the respected Mr. Chaplin to such a degree that he rose in his seat, and with indignant gesture denounced my painstaking effort as ‘another of those repeated instances of stubborn insensibility to the sentiments by which gentlemen in that House had been almost invariably actuated.’ The solemnity of the sentence was almost perfect. The censure was endurable. But up sprang Mr. Parnell to cover me with superfluous vindication. He asked the Speaker to declare Mr. Chaplin ‘out of order,’ remarked witheringly that Mr. Chaplin ‘would not dare to use such language out of the House,’ and, of course, got a snub from the presiding authority, which did not benefit my position either. Of course, too, the House crowed like a fighting-cock for Mr. Chaplin, and a motion for my suspension or decapitation would have been carried on the spot.

The crisis of the South Africa Bill, and the prime opportunity of the new policy, occurred on July 31. The House had made ready for the fray by passing a couple of new rules of debate by majorities which only varied between ten to one and thirty to one. I had paid the assembled wisdom, after a cursory glance at its products, the compliment of assuring it that ‘I had no words to express my appreciation of the additions to the regulations of debate.’ Confident in their precautions, the two front benches

resolved to rush the Bill through in a single sitting. We pointed out that we were prepared to discuss in the becoming manner so long as the proper hours for public business were not exceeded. We expressed our pain at the prospect of the affairs of the Empire being hurried through a midnight House with no supervision by public opinion, which was then of course on its pacific pillow with the partner of its joys and sorrows. Our concern for public rights and public dangers was unfeelingly derided. The Sassenachs exhibited quite a pretty wit in their encomiums on the members for Cavan, Meath, and Dungarvan in the guardian character of a triplet of Saints George for Merry England. Sir William Harcourt, to show the solidarity of the 'outs' with the 'ins' in the greatest emergency before or since the Armada, announced that Opposition and Government had arranged to crush all faction by a system of relays. What could we reply except to say that, 'as there were to be six hundred Englishmen against seven Irishmen, the conditions were perfectly equal, and the game might begin.'

After four or five hours in which we excelled ourselves in pathetic respect for the new rules of debate, somebody went to the dining-room where Mr. Butt, already ruffled by various reports of the factious plots of Mr. Parnell against his authority—monstrously exaggerated stories at that date—was discussing the situation after dinner with several friends who did not belong to the limited circle of our admirers. The complaint to the leader must have been both strong and inaccurate. I had been a model of painstaking docility to Speaker, chairman of committee, and new rules the whole day. Mr. Butt suddenly entered the House, and proceeded to trounce me with an indignant vigour, which was certainly heightened by his sense of my personal ingratitude to him in siding with enemies to his leadership. He had recommended my candidature at two elections, had caused me to be treated as 'the rightful member for Galway' after the performance of the selected judge, and offered me the option of the vacancy in Meath

after John Martin's death. I was the falsest villain to be conspiring against my chief and patron. As a matter of fact, I almost worshipped the noble-hearted old leader, and only wanted greater vigour of policy combined with union under his rule. Meantime he let me hear his actual sentiments. 'He repudiated the member for Dungarvan. The party repudiated the member for Dungarvan. If he thought the honourable member represented the Irish party, and the Irish party represented his country, he would retire from Irish politics as from a vulgar brawl.' When I rose to continue the debate, after this tribute from my chief, I was greeted with a storm of cheering such as I never heard exceeded in the wildest enthusiasm of a triumphant majority. The cheering was *not* for me. Mr. Butt was quitting the chamber infested by my presence ; and the united parties of the governing race were expressing their sense of his latest and greatest service to the State. The founder of Home Rule was forgiven for the moment. We went on with the debate, and when the midnight hour was passed, we feelingly observed that our conscientious objection to the public peril of Government without the eye of public opinion forced us to move to adjourn or to report progress. So we moved and moved until the day relay of the united parties of the governing race came to the House a little after the milk in the morning.

I had insisted on having a relay on our side also ; and at seven o'clock had sent Parnell and two others to the Westminster Palace Hotel for a few hours' rest. For me there could be no rest, as I alone knew the South Africa situation and the South Africa Bill. I was not to go to bed from eight o'clock in the morning of the preceding day until three o'clock in the morning of the day after the sitting, because I was engaged for a public dinner given by the Home Rule Confederation in London in celebration of my election a few weeks before. I did not quit the House for five minutes except about five o'clock A.M. on August 1, when I went to the buffet for a cup of strong coffee. At the buffet I had an experience which illustrates the high and

charming courtesy I often found in English opponents, even when our opposition was keenest. It happened that the approaches to the counter were crowded with night-weary legislators, and when I asked for my cup of coffee I had to wait a long time. In front of me was standing the minister in charge of the Bill, the Right Hon. James Lowther, also demanding his coffee, and getting served. Glancing over his shoulder he saw me, coffeeless, waiting my chance. In an instant he had slipped back from his place and his cup of coffee, and with a gay word of parliamentary chivalry had inducted me in his stead. 'Mr. O'Donnell, you must have my coffee; I am sure you are tired. You ought to be, for there are a hundred of our fellows dead beat. I have ordered another cup; you must take my place.' I could not refuse. Sir Philip Sidney at Zutphen was nothing to it. As I sipped, the division bells rang. The Right Hon. Jim laughed merrily: 'By Jove, if you have the coffee, I shall have the division.' I went on to consume the ministerial coffee; and that is why, in the record of the divisions during the twenty-six hours' sitting, the Right Hon. James Lowther counts one division more than I.

Towards eleven o'clock came the real crisis for me, the crisis which should land us in ruin or in victory. Ever since eight o'clock and the coming of the united day relay, I had felt the air growing thunderous, and I was watching, like a cat a mouse, for an opportunity on which I could pounce for ending the contest with honour, that is to say, with honour to us. That was the supreme consideration. The newcomers, fresh as paint, and courageous from their ham and eggs, scowled at the three or four rebels who held the committee against the loyal host. Then, the relays had not frightened the outlaws! War and the headsman's block was all the talk. I heartily wanted a pretext for milder manners. About eleven o'clock Sir William Harcourt, looking very bright and belligerent, had a conference with ministers in the presence of all. The whole committee could see that the resources of civilisation were being mobilised. Terror was to be struck into obdurate

hearts. My obdurate heart was just longing for the terror. Sir William arose. In stately accents and with corresponding demeanour, he spoke of a scene unprecedented in six centuries of Parliament. He referred feelingly to the corpses of four successive chairmen who had fallen in the place of honour, as each took the seat of his weary predecessor. But the patience of the House was exhausted. A cheer like a growl arose. The House had shown patience merely ‘to give the offenders rope enough.’ Now they would learn very quickly what penalties were in the power of outraged propriety, or words to that effect. Fortunately, Parnell was still slumbering in the Westminster Palace Hotel. I rose to condole with Sir William on the completeness of his defeat. He had challenged us the evening before to a contest of physical endurance. It was now the next day. He threatened us now with the penal powers of the House. He had been beaten in the physical endurance. He looked as if he had suffered by proxy. We never had any intention of questioning the power of the House. We were full of respect for its rules and customs. We declined to follow Sir William in his change of venue. We had said that no business should be done in the absence of the public press, in the hours of night. It was now approaching noon. The reporters honoured us again with their presence. We could proceed with the regular discussion of the Bill. So we discussed the Bill, and an Indian Bill, till half-past six that evening. The Right Hon. Jim got an opportunity of whispering as he passed me : ‘ You did that neatly.’ He looked as if he were sorry not to be an outlaw. How I loved him that day ! But I was glad that Parnell was ‘relaying’ between the sheets of the Westminster Palace Hotel. I was soon to be thoroughly convinced that he always kept an eye on the Irish gallery, and on the Irish-American gallery. When I play cricket, it is cricket. I hate messing up games.

If I have only given the bare outline of the contest, it is not to ignore the calm courage and versatile speeches of my six comrades. I thought them all splendid, especially as,

with the exception of Parnell and Biggar, they were outside the special drift of the whole affair. Dwyer Gray and Captain Nolan were inexhaustible in resource. Mr. Harley Kirk deserved most of all, as he was in ill-health and utterly devoid of speaking powers. He stubbornly voted and moved, moved and voted, without a hope of seeing himself accused of patriotic eloquence by anybody.

In Ireland, as I intended, the effect of the twenty-six hours' sitting was revolutionary. A handful of Irishmen had poured derision on the Union Parliament and the united British parties. Mr. Adam Kernahan had brought out every feature of the night in startling relief. Column after column of photographic sketching filled the *Freeman's Journal*, which was published in extraordinary editions. I was grieved to know that Mr. Butt's attack upon me had deeply shaken his position in Ireland. It prepared the way for Parnell's first blow at the unity of the Home Rule party a couple of months later. I had to write a manifesto-letter in defence of my action, in which I had to criticise Mr. Butt's absence of energy. It was a hateful thing to have to do, but it was vital for the new policy to have elbow-room in the hostile Parliament for a few years at least. At the same time, I assured Mr. Butt in every way that I was his faithful follower, and I had the immense pleasure of being reconciled to him. At the Home Rule Conference in the following January, with Mr. Butt in the chair, I pleased the genial old chief by declaring that we had learned isolated action from him, that even if he discarded us, we were his own offspring; for who like Isaac Butt had initiated the splendid isolation of standing independent and alone for Ireland in the midst of that assembly in London? 'Thanks, thanks, O'Donnell,' he said, and heartily clasped my hand. 'You are not at all a bad boy. We may make you a good boy yet.' Granted that he was sometimes *vieux jeu*, he was a great, a generous, a commanding and original spirit, Irish of the Irish to the soul. He got a scurvy return from a people that has had more mean representatives than any race of Europe.

The twenty-six hours' sitting drew remarkable audiences to the galleries of the House. The most distinguished figure was the new Earl of Beaconsfield returned to witness with his own eyes the strange portent of an unknown power which had arisen since Mr. Disraeli quitted the leadership of the House of Commons a few months before. The keenly curious statesman observed with intense attention the proceedings of the new malcontents from the unreconciled island. I have been told by a familiar friend of the many-gifted politician and romancer that Lord Beaconsfield was not many hours in doubt of the perilous character of the last development in the Irish question. He may well have sympathised with the difficulties of his successor. Sir Stafford Northcote, the most courteous and justice-loving of men, has suffered under the slashing attacks of Lord Randolph Churchill upon the *vis inertiae* of the old gang. I doubt if any other statesman would have had better fortune with us, and no other could have obtained a higher ascendancy for calm righteousness and a fine courtesy, which often moderated what they could not disarm. Personally, I made a point of marking my respect for Sir Stafford Northcote's personal nobility, whatever were my obligations against the policy of his party and nation.

In laying stress upon Mr. Parnell's great powers of searching criticism and lucid statement when once he had become familiar with his subject, and when the study of that subject entailed no excessive claims upon his love of leisure, I would be allowed to add my most serious protest against the Irish, as well as the English, tradition which attributes to Mr. Biggar any grotesqueness of thought corresponding to his physical deformity. Even that deformity disappeared from the eyes of those who knew and admired his acute observation, his solid reason, his manly generosity. The harsh and grating voice might sometimes veil the worth of the speech, but the worth was there. He supported me in suggestions of interracial alliance which left Mr. Parnell somnolent and unsympathetic. He was one of the first to lament and to oppose fatal defects in Mr. Parnell's

fulfilment of the great position to which he had been carried. In the hour of his death he was fortunate, as it spared him the crowning scandals of the Divorce Court and the interposition of the Nonconformist conscience in a discredited leadership and a disrupted party. I would have Englishmen also do him justice even upon the reproach or virtue of blocking the Bills. It is universally unknown in England that in blocking British Bills, Mr. Biggar was only a faithful and consistent imitator of the English policy of blocking Irish measures of every description which came under the half-past twelve rule. By that rule the Government had delivered Irish proposals of reform to the tender mercies of every opponent of Ireland. As the rule decreed that no measure to which there was opposition could be advanced a stage after half-past twelve, and as the Government usually monopolised the time before that hour, it acted as an invitation to every enemy to frustrate all Irish proposals. All Irish Bills were habitually blocked before Mr. Biggar took an opposite hand in the game. The confederacy of anti-Irish blockers was notorious. They were at least half a score. When they called on their allies they could be half a hundred. When we saw them take their places, we knew the fate of our Bills. 'I object.' The fun of hunting the Irish was exquisite until Biggar became hunter in turn. We knew that he enjoyed the work of vengeance.

We left him to tilt invincibly against every proposal of the enemies. Here is a list of English Bills which at one time in this session of 1877 lay impaled together on the Knight of Cavan's midnight spear :—

The Prisons (Scotland) Bill.
 The Valuation of Property (Ireland) Bill.
 The Roads and Bridges (Scotland) Bill.
 The Divine Worship Facilities Bill.
 The Public Health (Ireland) Bill.
 The Prisons (England) Bill.
 The Mutiny Bill.
 The Marine Mutiny Bill.
 The Patents for Inventions Bill.



MR. J. G. BIGGAR.

The House Occupiers' Disqualification Removal Bill.
The Oxford and Cambridge Bill.
The Peerage of Ireland Bill.
The Supreme Court of Judicature (Ireland) Bill.
The Legal Practitioners Bill.
The Threshing Machines Bill.

Any Government measure which Mr. Biggar suspected of a tendency to slip through in the small hours, was trans-fixed with an objection. Private members who stood high in the graces of the Government stood correspondingly low in the favour of the member for Cavan. Among such distinguished Conservatives was, of course, the Right Hon. Henry Chaplin; along with Mr. Chamberlain the twin parent of Tariff Reform. He was also no lover of Home Rule. The duel between him and Mr. Biggar over the Threshing Machines Bill, which was promoted with all the agricultural zeal of Mr. Chaplin, was watched with increasing amusement even by Mr. Chaplin's co-partners. Mr. Chaplin was a highly respected and model squire. His dignity was a little overpowering. He was a heavy father of debate, and his graces were occasionally elephantine. The member for Cavan was very rarely dignified, and he was more like an elf than an elephant. He was resolved that Mr. Chaplin should not have that Bill, unless the Government brought it in at such an early hour as to ensure—coupled with possible Hibernian participation—a shocking waste of Government time. Mr. Chaplin and Mr. Biggar used to sit watching one another under the joyous expectation of the legislature. 'Will threshing machines be on, or will Chaplin's Bill be on?' was a standing query which everybody asked everybody as the mystic hour approached. At length a midnight came when other business had left some forty minutes free for Mr. Chaplin's Bill. Instantly the member for Mid-Lincolnshire arose and very briefly proposed his measure for facilitating the use of threshing machines to the great benefit of agriculture. The Bill was as briefly seconded, so as to leave more time before the dreaded hour. When Mr. Biggar rose to object to the Bill,

he had good thirty minutes to fill in order to bring the measure within the fatal rule. And he had no Blue-book. An oblivious Parliament had forgotten to issue a Royal Commission on threshing machines. Mr. Biggar had to orate on these valuable but monotonous implements of high farming for thirty mortal minutes. It was a task for Cicero, and we had not yet learned to compare the member for Cavan with Cicero. Mr. Biggar did not see the use of coddling any machines with undue attention at the cost of the precious time of the House. He supposed that Mr. Chaplin was an earnest agriculturist. He might easily be worse. A shiver went round the listening Commons. Had the eagle of Cavan detected something detrimental in the surroundings of the blameless squire of Sleaford? Mr. Biggar analysed horse-driven threshing machines and steam-driven threshing machines. Neither could find absolute favour in his sight. And still there was quarter of an hour to go. Mr. Biggar endeavoured to find new points of depravity in the Chaplin branch of applied mechanics. The subject-matter seemed to be plainly giving out. Honour forbade any onlooker from interfering in such a combat. Mr. Chaplin already looked triumphant. After all, our hero was mortal and subject to some of the shortcomings of mortality. Who said so? The drooping head became erect, the Belfast Doric rose in inspiration on the midnight air. 'Mr. Speaker, sur, I may be blamed for bein' too conservative, but when all this fuss is made about threshin' machines, I ask myself, and I ask the House, "what can honestly be said against the good old flail?"' At that touch of genius the whole House burst into uproarious mirth. The Speaker rocked in ecstasy upon his chair. The member for Cavan never let go the good old flail. Mr. Chaplin's new-fangled contraptions tended to break up the sacredness of village life. The fathers of the Constitution had known nothing of threshing machines; but the good old flail was swinging at epochs of venerable antiquity. 'Order. Order. As the Bill is opposed, the reading stands adjourned.' Mr. Biggar

almost sank back into our arms. He wore the rapt look of one who should say : ' I have not lived in vain.' As for Mr. Chaplin, as he strode out of the House, we were sure that he was too good a Christian to vent his sentiments in unregenerate expressions. He looked, however ; he looked ; as if the entire canonical collection of formularies of anathema would have totally failed to coequale the magnitude of his emotion. From that midnight the fame of the member for Cavan was assured. The Serjeant-at-Arms, when he wanted the House counted out, as some friends had sent him a box at the theatre, promptly sought advice from Mr. Biggar. The Speaker was suspected of connecting Mr. Biggar with occasional opportunities of a holiday from the chair.

Such were the tales that won belief,
And such the colouring fancy gave
To one young, warm, and dauntless chief,
Who, though no more than mortal brave,
Blocked for the land he could not save.

There is a feature of the South Africa Bill debates which has received no notice, not only, of course, from the romancers of Parnellite biography, but from anybody else ; and yet there is none which more completely deserves the attentive consideration and examination of serious students of parliamentary government. Indeed, these debates, in which my system of the new policy was first thoroughly applied, may be said to reveal the possibilities of parliamentary government in a sense which has been generally neglected by Hallams, Walpoles, Leckys, Bagehots, and other historians and commentators of the Constitution, but which really deserve the best meditation of all who desire to use or abuse the opportunities of that form of human wisdom. The new policy, indeed, appears to have been already unsurpassable from its birth, even as Pallas Athene sprang, panoplied and perfect, from the brain of Zeus. The particular feature to which I refer in this place is the part played by English supporters during

the discussions around the South Africa Bill. Perhaps the term 'supporters' is hyperbolic. They intended anything but support of us, which made their assistance the more interesting and instructive. They were the Liberals and lovers of justice who were unfavourably impressed by the annexation of the Transvaal Republic, and who considered that it would turn out badly. In the first rank of these just men—and wise men, it was seen too late—were Mr. Fawcett and Mr. Courtney. His misfortune and his talents, enhanced by the gallant way in which he bore blindness, made Mr. Fawcett an influential and respected personage. Mr. Courtney's case was less pathetic, but his learning and love of righteousness were not less impressive. Perhaps he seemed too righteous. Both of these distinguished men condemned the forward policy in South Africa, and condemned the new policy in the House of Commons. Both made admirable speeches, not inclined to excessive brevity, and capable under judicious treatment of multiplication and extension. A brigade of Irish members, not quite new politicians, but inclined to do something, were detailed to encourage Mr. Fawcett and Mr. Courtney. The arts of encouragement are many. Repeated plaudits can make a few sentences develop into the discourse of nearly an hour. Why stop when one is appreciated? Correction in terms which necessitate crushing reply is often more efficient than applause even. A desire for further explanation by such a master of the matter is an inducement to prolonged speech which is seldom known to fail. The House of Commons always contains numbers of gentlemen quite the equals in knowledge and ability of ministers and ex-ministers, and additionally anxious to apply their gifts to the enlightenment of their colleagues because unjust fortune has lent greater prominence to far inferior persons. Many members of the Home Rule party devoted themselves to the pleasant duty of encouraging Professor Fawcett and Mr. Leonard Courtney, both highly esteemed and intellectually endowed. Our principle, already given, 'Never to hinder or impede the exercise of any rights of a member by a British member

of Parliament provided he does not belong to the Government,' was never more satisfactorily rewarded. As both these distinguished gentlemen also deemed it due to them to speak in the very cream of the Government time, we had frequently the pleasing spectacle of Mr. Fawcett or Mr. Courtney responding to our disseminated applause by the most judicious exposures of the iniquity of the Cabinet, while the Government whips alternately glared at the clock and at the distinguished gentlemen. The sum-total of the oratory from both sides of the House which aided the new policy in the course of a single session reached proportions which often dispensed us from the need of any expenditure of language entirely. We were public benefactors of the most evident benefit. Nor should it be forgotten that members of the front benches also were frequently known to appreciate the encouragement of unsuspected cheers, and to enjoy the opportunity of winning the tribute of a just admiration. On the night of the twenty-six hours' sitting Messrs. Fawcett and Courtney declined to continue the discussion after three o'clock in the morning. Up to three o'clock they had rendered much valuable assistance. They were understood to explain that our obstinate struggle would injure the good cause of the Boers. As, however, it was our conviction that the good cause of the Boers must be promoted by a good deal more than the Government's thanks for untroubled slumber, and as we had several other objects in view, we endured without reformation the censures of our accidental allies.

THE HOME RULE PARTY AT WESTMINSTER: PARNELL ATTACKS BUTT—THE COMING OF DAVITT—PARNELL, DAVITT, AND DEVOY SUBSTITUTE AGRARIAN REVOLUTION FOR HOME RULE

- IX. THE SESSION OF 1877: PARNELL UNDERMINING BUTT
- X. THE SESSION OF 1878: SECOND HOME RULE CONFERENCE — FENIAN CONSULTATION — AMERICAN FENIANISM ON THE SCENE
- XI. THE SESSION OF 1878: MR. BUTT'S BREAKING HEALTH AND HEART—PARNELL CONTINUES DISSENSION—THE TORIES AND THE CLERGY
- XII. THE SESSION OF 1879: THE DEATH OF ISAAC BUTT—MR. SHAW, M.P., AS CHAIRMAN—THE SKIRMISHING FUND STARTS THE LAND LEAGUE—THE LAST ARMY FLOGGING ACT—THE FARMERS' ALLIANCE

CHAPTER IX

THE SESSION OF 1877: PARNELL UNDERMINING BUTT

The Failing Lion—Parnell's Gallery Play—The Obstructionist Craze—
Parnell evicts Butt.

I HAVE mentioned the debate this year on Mr. Butt's motion for a Committee of Inquiry into the Irish demand for Home Rule. I return to the subject, for some grave reasons which will appear. In the first place, it was Mr. Shaw, M.P. for County Cork, who proposed the motion in Mr. Butt's place. Mr. Shaw subsequently succeeded Mr. Butt, at first in the leadership of the united party, and then as leader of the Constitutional Home Rulers, after Mr. Parnell had attacked Shaw as he had attacked Butt, and had founded the Land League party on the agrarian issue, combined, it may be said, with the Devoy or Irish-American issue, to be described in another chapter. Mr. Shaw's choice by Mr. Butt to propose his Home Rule motion seemed to such as knew of Butt's failing health like a sort of recommendation of the next heir, so to speak. Mr. Shaw was a Protestant Dissenter. Mr. Butt, we know, was a member of the Protestant Episcopal Church. The seconder of the motion was a representative Episcopalian Protestant and landowner, Captain King Harman, M.P. for County Sligo in company with Mr. Denis O'Connor, the brother of Mr. O'Connor Don, who was himself M.P. for Roscommon and probably the most representative Catholic in Ireland. There was in such names an intentional demonstration of a truth most necessary to be impressed upon the English mind, that all the three religions in Ireland were alike no bar to patriotism and self-government. It was a demonstration of Irish fraternity such as was to be

never more possible after Parnellism and Davittism had driven alike the Catholic O'Conors and the Protestant King Harman, along with the whole mass of the classes which had much to lose, into the camp of the Unionist party. All these distinguished Irishmen, it cannot be too strongly borne in mind, had been elected with enthusiasm, only a couple of years before, under the protection of the ballot. If the Irish voters could really and of set purpose jump from Constitutional Home Rule to sheer separation, and from electing with enthusiasm great landowners to adopting prairie value, the very bases for native government were called in question. I was quite prepared to employ, I was employing, a system of immensely increased hostility and increased activity, for the purpose of weakening and breaking the anti-Irish influence and party throughout the Empire. But I wanted to spare my own country from perturbation. I even hoped that a strong and united Ireland would be infinitely more worth conciliating by the statesmen of the Empire under the stress of the embarrassments and complications which I expected from the operation of that hostile activity. Even if I were anxious to start a social revolution in England, and to have Jack Cade in Southwark, I could not contemplate setting the social system of Ireland on its head into the bargain. It was the singular strategy of Parnellism to convert Ireland into a wide welter of disorder and convulsion while leaving the British Empire in strength and majesty undisturbed and omnipotent! If troubles came upon Ireland, I should prefer to export them. Mr. Parnell was said to spend the generous subscriptions of his countrymen, in an English quiet corner, 'living maritally'—to quote the euphemism of his adoring biographer, Mr. R. Barry O'Brien—in company, rumour alleged, with the wife of a colleague, while letting red ruin stalk through the Irish countryside. The last Home Rule debate of a united Home Rule party becomes a matter of some interest, considering that immediately after the close of this session of 1877 Mr. Parnell accepted the mission of openly opposing the Home Rule founder and openly splitting the Home Rule party. By a curious

coincidence, or retribution, the man who placed Parnell in offensive and insolent opposition to Mr. Butt and deposed the latter from the presidency of the Home Rule Confederation was later the man who mainly dismissed Mr. Parnell in turn from the party chairmanship after the Divorce Court scandal followed by the notorious scenes in Committee-room No. 15.

In the Home Rule debate the emergency, the growing emergency, of the subject was marked by the weighty and distinguished character of the opponents of the Irish demand. Mr. Forster prepared for his own disastrous failure in Ireland five years later by clever declamation on the evils incident to a weakening of the integrity of the Empire. He even declared that Home Rule would lessen the interest which Irishmen at present take in India and the Colonies. As if any branch of the Government likes Irish politicians to meddle with India or the Colonies ! Mr. Fawcett, as an advanced Radical, and Lord Hartington and Sir Michael Hicks-Beach on behalf of the front benches, rang the changes on the increasing prosperity of Ireland which Home Rule would impede or ruin. Two years later that Irish prosperity was requiring the distribution of public relief, and Michael Davitt was founding the Land League on the express plea that it was necessary to prevent national starvation as in the Black Famine. But the House of Commons rejected the inquiry motion. Mr. Shaw, on the Irish side, had practically refuted in anticipation the commonplaces of the party of negation. 'The Imperial Parliament lacked (1) the time, (2) the knowledge, and (3) the capacity to legislate for Ireland ; while, on the other hand, even the united representatives of the Irish constituencies were always hopelessly outnumbered by the battalion of strangers who, so far as Ireland was concerned, represented only lack of deliberation, lack of knowledge, and lack of ability.' If these conditions produced prosperity in Ireland, it was strange that they invariably produced failure and misery everywhere else. If Englishmen were convinced of the superiority of foreign, ignorant, and incompetent quasi-legislation, how strange that they did

not put their convictions into practice by inviting some unsympathetic and incompetent foreigners to possess the overwhelming majority in the British legislature! Captain King Harman insisted that Home Rule implied connexion and not separation, and protested against overriding the national demand of four millions of Irishmen. If a thousand Irish landowners had spoken like King Harman, there would certainly have been Home Rule, and quite certainly there would have been no Land League.

There could be no doubt upon which side was the moral victory. No conclusion could be drawn from the mere number of votes in the House. So long as the system of party government endures in England, the non-conversion of the front bench implies the non-conversion of the party. When the front bench changes its faith, it is followed by a mob of ready neophytes, like an army of Franks rushing into the waters of baptism at the heels of a Chlodwig. A front bench rarely, rarely, changes its convictions at other epochs than the eves of general elections and under some spur of competition. No prudent follower will long anticipate the conversion of his leaders. It was a fact significant of widespread change and progressive revolution of opinion, that, even in the teeth of front bench stolidity, Mr. Butt's demand was backed by such representatives of great English traditions as Sir Wilfrid Lawson in Cumberland, Mr. Joseph Cowen in Newcastle, and Mr. Jacob Bright in Manchester. A couple of years later Liverpool returned a Home Ruler in the person of Lord Ramsay. If the Home Rule party had not been split by Parnellism, and if the new vigour had been allowed to reinforce the ancient right, there could be only a brief struggle before the achievement of victory.

I had become gradually aware that efforts to divide the national forces and to discard the founder were happening throughout the Home Rule organisations in Great Britain. Besides my hon. secretaryship and vice-presidency of the Confederation, I was connected by special ties with the Irish constituencies in Chelsea and Glasgow, and I had

been for some years president in those London and Scottish branches. Only three days after the close of the twenty-six hours' sitting, only three days since I had sent Parnell to 'relay' for four hours at the Westminster Palace Hotel, there came simultaneously from private friends in Chelsea and Glasgow telegrams to this effect: 'Circulars professing to come from headquarters have reached a number of our leading men suggesting that Mr. Butt be strongly censured for his denunciation of you before the enemies of Ireland.' Good Heaven! Some rascals were pretending to avenge me on the kind old leader, as if I had any spite against him for his outburst. Now I knew why he had flared up. He knew that there was a plot against his leadership, and he had probably been told that I was in it. He had a Donegal temper, he owned sometimes, 'as he had a right to have.' He was born there, and he was intensely proud of his descent from the O'Donnells. How could I bear anger against the great old man? Further messages named the man mentioned above—he subsequently became an M.P. under Parnell—as being the organiser of the whole plot. He was a former leader of Fenians, had been, or still was, a member of the Supreme Council of the Brotherhood. I went to the offices of the Confederation at once, and found that a request had been made by some London members of the executive for a meeting of the Executive Council. Further requests specified the duty of the executive to take steps 'to support the active policy in the House of Commons,' a suggestion which was quite legitimate; but I felt sure there was mischief brewing. We had the meeting of executive, and then out came the demand to pass a severe censure on Mr. Butt and the majority of the party! It was added that Mr. Parnell and Mr. Biggar wished the executive to pass the censure. I doubted the possibility of this last assertion being true. But I could make no effectual resistance. The meanest side of the rotten business was that my own particular friends were so angry at Butt's attack on me, that they now blindly supported a rascally intrigue against the

party and leader. The utmost I could get was a promise to keep the vote strictly secret, pending further consideration. I hastened to have a special meeting summoned to quash the surprise motion which had been sprung on us ; and as both Biggar and Parnell denied that they had authorised the attack upon Mr. Butt, I had the whole proceeding cancelled. Yet practically the same vote of censure was proposed and carried next year, and was sent to the public press, notwithstanding another promise, with the statement, not again denied, that the censure had been proposed at the desire of Messrs. Parnell and Biggar. I had only caused the postponement of the outrage for a single year. Besides, though I had saved the executive, to some extent, from identifying itself with the worst forms of discourtesy to the founder of the Home Rule movement, I was warned that at the coming Convention of the branches of the Home Rule Confederation, Mr. Butt would be removed from the presidency, and Mr. Parnell elected in his place. But will Parnell accept a proposal to substitute him for the leader ? ‘ Yes, certainly.’ The utmost I could do was to announce that I should cease at the same time to be the honorary secretary. Several of my friends of old standing remonstrated : ‘ You are only hurting yourself. You are as popular as anybody now. Do not appear to be screening the Whigs.’ I maintained my determination, I denied the Whiggery of Mr. Butt, and did not even attend the Convention. Up to the close of 1876 Parnell had been silent and unknown. During the last session he had done absolutely nothing without aid and guidance. Now a faction hostile to unity were making him the rival of the founder of Home Rule, whose white hair and genial presence had been in the front of every Irish national struggle since the collapse of Fenianism. It made me more and more determined to keep clear of the contrivers of such ingratitude. In a few years Parnell was writing quasi-penitent promises to Mr. Gladstone from Kilmainham to support Liberal principles in Ireland. A few years more, and he had gone out of Irish life in a divorce squabble. That was what the dissensionists had made a leader !

It must be clearly understood that in paying deference and rendering obedience to Isaac Butt in 1877, I was in no way blind to the fact that his powers were hindered by age and ill-health, and that, in any case, his system of policy required to be supplemented. Intelligent as ever, eloquent as ever, as great a master as ever of a clear and telling style illuminated by anecdote and experience, an erudite scholar and an acute lawyer; all qualities of the first importance in an Irish leader in the British Parliament; nevertheless he was increasingly subject to fatigue, to excitement, to jealousy, to hot though passing anger. But what could be less difficult than semi-filial respect and indulgence for such foibles? The great old man was not to live long. I knew, as others knew, from his friend and physician, Dr. O'Leary, M.P., that many symptoms pointed to heart disease. As a matter of fact, he died in less than two years from his brutal deposition by Parnell from the presidency of the Confederation. Was it too much, even in the interests of the active policy, to leave for so short a time in his place of pride and honour the illustrious veteran who was still so worthy of honour? His jealousy should be soothed with fond flattery. His querulous temper, always easy to appease, could be met by added consideration. There was absolutely nothing in the active policy, as I had invented and systematised it, which required bluster or obstruction. On the contrary, obstruction was the surest way to kill, or at least to cripple, the active policy. How possibly were a small band of Irish members to ingratiate themselves into being leaders or counsellors among vast races of non-Irishmen, among English democrats, South African farmers, Australian and Canadian colonists, Indian Brahmins and Kyasts, by a mere policy of swagger, and brag, and offensiveness, and discourtesy to your own countrymen even, of blind hindrance, and ridiculous threat? When the time came for more than threats, when the Parliament had crushed obstruction, as well as mutilated itself, by the closure, where was the tremendous, the terrific, the critical and denunciatory, Bobadillo of Avondale? Sulking in disguise round Captain O'Shea's villa at Eltham.

It is quite true that there was obstructiveness, far more than I liked, in a great many of the scenes in which I co-operated. It could not be otherwise. Parnell and Biggar literally knew nothing which could cover a manœuvre or exculpate a turning movement. They had iron courage in debates, and that valuable quality of others besides politicians under difficulties, imperturbable assertion. When once started in a fight, they inevitably gravitated to the only methods they were thoroughly competent to employ. They were my comrades. Such as they were, they were indispensable to me. I held by them to the utmost limit of human endurance. If it had depended on Parnell, the twenty-six hours' sitting would have been interrupted by our summary suspension. With his eye on the quasi-Fenian gallery, he wanted a fight to a finish. As the reader will remember, I had hurried over the golden bridge offered to me by Sir William Harcourt at eleven o'clock, while Parnell was between the sheets at his hotel. When he returned, refreshed and confident, to find the crisis over and the tense excitement calmer, he turned to me in furious disappointment, and almost hissed: 'Why the devil did you haul down the flag?' To which I replied with gentle intonation: 'My dear Parnell, go to the devil and inquire.' There was always this looking to his gallery in all his co-operation. In the very midst of our debates on the South Africa Bill, instead of even keeping up appearances, instead of remembering the interests of the Transvaal Republic for which he was engaged to fight, instead of maintaining—as must be maintained if the active policy was not to be snuffed out on the spot—that our proceedings were nothing but the genuine outpouring of hearts moved by indignation at wrong, what did he do? He went down to an Irish public meeting on July 13 at Manchester, and proceeded to hold forth in this unspeakably egregious fashion: 'For my part I do not believe in a policy of conciliation of English feeling or English prejudices. . . . What did we ever get in the past by trying to conciliate them? . . . Why was the English Church in Ireland

disestablished and disendowed? Because there was an explosion at Clerkenwell and there was a lock shot off a prison-van at Manchester.' (Great cheering.) Had the man a single brigade of rifles, a single battery of cannon? Here was talk for an armed insurrection. And he never meant to be anything but a parliamentarian! When the Invincibles reddened their damnable knives, Parnell ran to publish a solemn protest of his peaceableness and abhorrence. His words might read as incitements to violence; but those who knew him knew he would shift. If the House of Commons, after that speech alone, had laid the three of us by the heels in the Tower, and expelled us under a perpetual disqualification, it would not only have acted as any legislature in Europe might act, but would have squashed the active policy along with the active politicians. Once off the floor of the House, there would not have been a kick in the tremendous Charles Stewart Parnell.

Even in the actual debates in the House, Parnell never lost an opportunity of letting everybody see that he took no real interest in the merits or demerits of the measure. He was showing off before his gallery, and making that gallery think he meant things, of which, above all others, he intended to fight shy. Thus, on July 25, when the annexation of the Transvaal was actually the matter of debate, Mr. Parnell manufactured a pretext for dragging English tyranny in Ireland into the hurly-burly. 'As an Irishman, coming from a country that had experienced to its fullest extent the result of English interference in its affairs and the consequences of English cruelty and tyranny, I feel a special satisfaction in preventing and thwarting the intentions of the Government in respect of this Bill.' Then our gallant fight was not made, or to be made, for reasons of right and justice or because the Transvaal Republic had been treated without faith or honesty, but because Cromwell had sacked Drogheda and Mountjoy had harried and ravaged Ulster! The President of the Utrecht Committee wrote to me frequently that it seemed as if the Irish members were not touching the question at all, that it was a pity

that they did not defend the Transvaal for the sake of justice and international law. In my replies I minimised Mr. C. S. Parnell's spectacular proceedings as much as possible, and said that we had found it necessary by every means to find time to allow for the gradual enlightenment of public opinion. I sent on one occasion—O thrice wicked ruse—an admirable speech by Mr. Courtney, and got warmly thanked for having a colleague who really could speak about the Transvaal! Of course, I make allowance, as much as I can, for Parnell's wholly uninformed and uneducated intelligence, which made cultivated reference to anything outside the commonplaces of Irish agitation almost an impossibility, and in fact, when coupled with his incorrigible hatred of study, an absolute impossibility. He remained to the last the rusticated undergraduate. By the way, one of his sisters, Mrs. Dickenson, recently wrote a book, in which she states that the rustication happened over an affair with a woman. I doubt it. Curious if the shadow of the petticoat should have darkened his career to the end.

This poor stuff, however, which was daily bringing our policy within an ace of ruin, which was irritating intolerably many of our best comrades, and which could be spoken quite as intelligently by any bog-trotter on a barrel, commanded a fever of admiration among a number of quasi-leaders of quasi-Fenians who were accustomed to discuss the perpetual annihilation of England while modestly contributing to the English excise duties. These harmless persons expected great things—they could not possibly say what—from Mr. Parnell's blood-curdling hints. 'We felt he was the man for us,' writes Mr. R. Barry O'Brien, interpreting the views of one of those quasi-Fenian authorities. How altering even the whole of the rules of the House could establish the Irish Republic, none of those remarkable rebels *in petto* thought to inquire. The true leaders of Fenianism, the men who still believed in a foreign invasion and a national insurrection, had no such flattering illusions on the miraculous efficacy of all-night sittings. They

continued to opine that it would take a much more considerable effort to hoist their green flag over Dublin Castle. I remember that at our Joint Conference with the Fenian representatives of Ireland and America, to be narrated in a later chapter, the Irish member of the Supreme Council, Mr. John O'Leary, almost opened the proceedings by turning to us in that cold, courtly way of his, and remarking: 'I ought to forewarn you, gentlemen, that I have not yet been able to see how Ireland is to be freed by keeping the Speaker of the English House of Commons out of bed.' This saying of O'Leary's was doubly unpleasant to me, as it was another revelation of the popular idiocy in Ireland concerning the objects of the policy which was mine, and which was degraded by this caricature.

The truth was that a vast number of inexperienced Irishmen, with no other knowledge of the world than they derived from weekly newspapers more renowned for the purity of their patriotism than the solidity of their information, were first delighted beyond measure at finding Irishmen capable of discounting the frowns of the British Parliament, and then passed by a popular though incoherent logic to the conclusion that anything might be expected from such daring heroes. Mr. Parnell played up to these Irish for all he was worth, as the saying goes. Until he was found out by the humblest capacity even, the pose succeeded in producing a whirlwind, a tornado, of enthusiastic popularity—enthusiastic in proportion to its entire unreason. I was dragged into the deceptive prospectus as an apparent director in spite of myself. When I went down to my constituency at this delirious period, the horses were taken from my carriage in spite of my despairing protests, and I was drawn by human muscles much inferior to the equine power which they displaced, while shouts rose on every side: 'Hurrah!' 'Keep them at it!' 'Don't let them sleep a wink!' 'Pull down their ould Parliament!' 'Hurrah for Parnell and O'Donnell!' Of course, it was only the simpler elements of the population which behaved with this extravagance; but simplicity is a widely disseminated virtue of popular

political excitement. I do not think, I certainly cannot remember, that I ever got thanks in Ireland for the most painstaking and permanent things which I have done ; but for alleged acts which, on the showing of my admirers, were singularly frivolous, I have received unstinted and thunderous approbation. That is one of the reasons why I have paid no attention to the voice of the crowd, and why I quitted the parliamentary representation of those good people. The strongest argument against Home Rule was the Home Rulers.

I might easily pardon the unintelligence of such persons and their infatuated hallucination that mere obstruction in the House of Commons could tame the heirs of Nelson and Wellington—they had hardly heard of either—but the brutality of the deposition of the old leader ! There was no possible attenuation of that. Walking upstairs already brought on prolonged palpitation of the heart, and during some of the seizures, we knew from Dr. O'Leary that Mr. Butt quite lost the power of thought. And now this venerable leader and servant of his nation was to be insulted before mocking and triumphant England by being rejected in favour of one of his most recent followers and mutineers. The scene of the actual betrayal was painful in the extreme. It was the annual Convention of the Home Rule Confederation. Parnell was there with his wire-pullers. Isaac Butt was alone, with that friendly air of his being at home always among his countrymen. He felt certain to the last that the fellows would shrink from such an outrageous thing. Had he not founded the Home Rule Confederation on the great day of its inauguration at Liverpool years ago ? Was he not the acknowledged chief of the Home Rule League and party ? It was not possible that the Irish colony in England would put such a slight upon the representative of the nation itself in the old land. But it was quite possible, and the Parnellites proceeded to prove it. Mr. Parnell was proposed. Nobody proposed the Irish premier, who had been president since the foundation of the movement, who was still the representative and leader of Home

Rule Ireland. Parnell was elected. Parnell took the chair from Isaac Butt. The ingrate crime was accomplished. Less than four months previously, Parnell, writing a public letter to Mr. Butt on April 13, had renewed his pledge 'to continue to follow your lead as regards Irish questions!'

The insult was heartrending for the old chief. It was, besides, the open disclosure to English opinion that the Home Rulers were divided, that nobody now could say what was their programme, their policy, their relations to Great Britain and the Empire. Was it to be a return to simple repeal? Was it to be separation and abstention or insurrection? With whom was Parnell in league, and how far did he mean to go? Would there be an extremist declaration of war against Home Rule as well as against the Home Rule chief? The Irish national demand was again in the melting-pot. Nobody knew what might happen next. It had been the strength of the Home Rule party that it asked for King, Lords, and Commons of Ireland, while recognising and claiming share, representation, and responsibility in the Empire. Every far-seeing English statesman knew that Imperial Confederation must come, if the Empire was to endure. Lord Salisbury saw as clearly as anybody that the federation of the Empire was inevitable and desirable, even though he refused to see in Parnellism a basis of constitutional change in Ireland. Home Rule could possibly, even in English eyes, fit into a general scheme of Imperial Federalism. But separation, abstention, an appeal to war without even the prerequisites of war; that was as hurtful from the national standpoint as it was ludicrously unthinkable from the Imperial point of view. Parnell might hint at rebellion, which he never meant, against England. He had certainly rebelled against the Irish party. Was that a day's march towards the Old House in College Green? If the Irish landowners and men of property generally had not yet been won to Home Rule even by the presence in the Home Rule ranks of men like Butt, and King Harman, and Shaw, and Lord Robert Montague, and Lord Francis Conyngham, and O'Connor Don,

and Hon. Charles Ffrench, where were the chances of a chance that they would be reconciled to the Government of their countrymen, if those countrymen began by exterminating the Constitutional and Conservative Home Rulers under Mr. Butt? Parnellism would mean in such a contingency not only the division of the party, but the eternal division of the nation. It was no wonder that the personal contumely, when recognised by Mr. Butt as involving the shattering of all his hopes, the fruit of his labour, and his national ideal, struck the old chief like a death-blow. Even the ultra-Parnellist, Mr. R. Barry O'Brien, admits the cruelty of that stab from a revolted soldier. Quoting the words of the underling who moved the deposition, he writes: 'There was no mistaking Butt's feelings. He felt the blow keenly. . . . There was no blinking the fact—he was greatly pained. . . . He turned round. His eyes were filled with tears, as he said in the most touching way, "Ah! I never thought the Irish in England would do this to me."' Was ever meaner reward or more brutal ingratitude than this? And remember. This venerable statesman and patriot, scholar, historian, economist, university professor, great lawyer, winning and eloquent advocate, who had been a luminary of Irish Conservatism, who had defended the Young Ireland prisoners of 1848, who had defended the Fenian prisoners of 1866 and 1867, who had made and led the revival of self-government; this Irish Deák and Cavour, standing white-haired on the brink of the grave, was hustled out of his honours by whom? By a rusticated undergraduate, an insolvent young squire, without a profession or an education, who had been brought into public life by Butt, who had not tried even obstruction for twelve months, who owed to others the whole of his knowledge of politics and Parliament—and that was not much—who had literally done nothing but interpolate big talk about Ireland into irrelevant subjects and situations, and who never meant a word of his big talk; a young man of thirty-one who had done little and knew less; this was the supplanter of Isaac Butt—this disciple of Michael Davitt,

hero of prairie value and no rent, and the Kilmainham capitulation ; friend and traitor to Captain O'Shea, and the employer, the idol, and the victim of Mr. T. M. Healy. *Pauvre, pauvre, pauvre, jeune homme pauvre !*

The ousting of Mr. Butt from the Confederation occurred on September 1, 1877. On September 8 Mr. Parnell improved the occasion by this peculiarly unscrupulous misrepresentation of the vast majority of the Home Rule party : ' The followers of Mr. Butt say we must behave as the English members behave ; in fact, we must be Englishmen. We must go into English society, and make ourselves agreeable.' The large majority of Mr. Butt's supporters had no society but Irish, and Mr. Parnell knew it. He, on the contrary, was soon going to devote himself to ' English society,' and to abandon for his Englishwoman even his own deluded followers. Down in County Limerick a week later, he fell back on these hints of tremendous deeds : ' We shall show them that with the Irish people at our back we shall meet the English threats with deeds.' What deeds ? In reality Parnell was as pacific as a jack-rabbit. A week later he was painting lurid pictures in County Meath : ' I think that that opposition to English rule is best which is most felt. . . . No amount of eloquence could achieve what the fear of an impending insurrection, what the Clerkenwell explosion and the shot into the police-van, had achieved.' Ever harping on blood and fire, he felt his own intentions as pure of valorous intent as a child in long clothes. He talked daggers, but he used none. In Mr. R. Barry O'Brien's Biography there stands the record (vol. ii, p. 312) of another of Mr. Parnell's utterances to some members of Parliament of his tail just previous to his imprisonment in Kilmainham.

' Suppose they arrest you, Mr. Parnell, who will take your place ? ' ' Ah,' he said, deliberately looking through a glass of champagne which he had just raised to his lips. ' Ah, if I am arrested, Captain Moonlight will take my place.' (! ! !) What a picture ! Comment would spoil it. When Captain Moonlight's vice-Parnellship had culminated

in the horrible extremity of the Phoenix Park murders, poor Bobadillo was wild with effusive sorrow, and that rosy champagne view on his locum-tenens and his characteristic ways was changed to a soul-felt denunciation of 'the cowardly and unprovoked assassination of a friendly stranger.' Some years afterwards, I met in the hall of the Old Guards' Union in Dublin, a Fenian Veterans' Club, an old man with beautiful features and gentle aspect, who was the father of Brady, the most stolid of the murderers of Mr. Burke and Lord Frederick Cavendish. The old man had not yet got over his wonder at the vehemence of Parnell's denunciation of his boy's atrocious deed. 'Didn't he tell us a hundred times to imitate the men at Clerkenwell, and my boy believed him.' That undoubtedly was the reason of the fury of the Invincible sympathisers after Parnell's denunciation; fury which caused Parnell to be protected by police and detectives against their menaces. They had expected a grateful sympathiser, where they found an indignant anathematiser. Parnell's bluster about terrible deeds had all been mere exciting rhetoric. When coarse natures misunderstood the pure symbolism of his gruesome sayings, he was so innocently horrified that he almost fainted on the sofa! An uncrowned king!

A shape of lath and plaster had stood as leader there,
 With puppetry and paint-work to make the gazers stare;
 There fell a wind of judgment, and lo! the place was bare.

My gifted and gallant friend and comrade, Mr. Baker Greene of the *Morning Post*, called on me one day and opened in this way: 'Your young friend, Master Parnell, does not know what he is talking about, and he is talking criminal nonsense. If he had seen Clerkenwell, as I saw it, with scores of poor creatures writhing in agony, and blood and brains everywhere, he would not so often talk his incendiary bosh about the Clerkenwell explosion. Some fool will be exploding something else, to get a paragraph in the next speech.' The intense force of this protest can be realised, when the reader knows that Baker Greene

had been the counsel at the trial of Barrett, the criminal fool who had fired the barrel of gunpowder outside Clerkenwell Prison. The miserable fool fired the powder in order to blow down the prison wall sufficiently to allow a couple of Fenian prisoners to escape, without knowing anything of the force of powder, or that he was about to wreck a working-class quarter, and would have blown his friends to atoms if they had been on that side of the jail. Baker Greene took pity on the stupid ignorance of the wretched Barrett, and struggled to give him a chance of his life.

Barrett was hanged, a half-innocent tragic creature ; but we can understand the horror with which his chivalrous defender heard ' the uncrowned ' deliverer's panegyrics on that idiotic abomination.

Just before Christmas of this year Mr. Butt might congratulate himself on the final success of his long crusade for the liberation of the Fenian convicts, in which the eloquent Mr. O'Connor Power made arduous efforts and had the leading share. Among other prisoners Michael Davitt obtained a ticket of leave. Mr. Enright of Chelsea, a member of executive of the Confederation, accompanied him to my chambers in Serjeants' Inn, where I first saw the tall, dark, romantic-looking man, looking more like a starved poet than a revolutionist. When the Land League epoch is reached, it will be worth while to deal at some length with the career of this remarkable personage, who was so singularly aided by the policy of her Majesty's ministers to make confusion worse confounded in the island of destiny, as the Gaelic singers used to call Ireland. What destiny ?

CHAPTER X

SECOND HOME RULE CONFERENCE—FENIAN CONSULTATION— AMERICAN FENIANISM ON THE SCENE

The Session of 1878—Butt and Parnell—Butt accepts Activity but condemns Obstruction—The Home Rule Conference in January—The Jacobins want a County Gentleman—They think They have got Him—The Alliance of Rome and London—The Irish Prelates hostile to Home Rule—Lord Leitrim's Murder—Famine Memories in America—The Beginning of the American-Irish Intervention—The Irish Mission to America in 1876—No British Ambassador—Then no Washington Government—Parnell admires the Constitution of the State of New York—The Clann-na-Gael Mission to Ireland—The Joint Conference of the Fenian Brotherhood and the Active Party—My Programme—Parnell's Ambiguity—The New Departure—Parnell surrenders Home Rule—The Prelude of the Land League.

HISTORIES and annals differ in the essential circumstance that annals are enslaved to the chronological sequence of events, while histories can use the developments of subsequent years in order to explain the obscurity of first beginnings, as well as draw from occurrences at an earlier stage the clues to the purport of later manifestations. Unfortunately everything which has appeared on the subject of the Irish Parliamentary party down to the present has followed so closely the system of annals that the reader can neither learn what was the original drift of the personages nor compare, from the standpoint of adequate information, the course actually pursued with the course which was to be expected from the outset, or which has resulted from the addition of intervening circumstances. At the opening of the session of 1878 it was easy to one conversant with recent history to perceive that the methods of conflict had only varied while remaining essentially unchanged. The germ of dissension in the Home Rule party had immensely developed. The nation-splitters had become

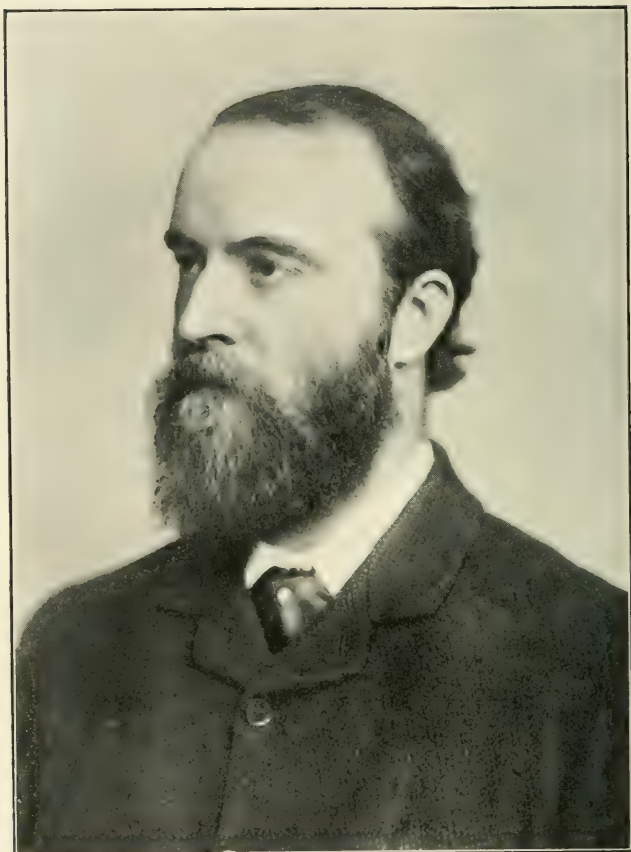


Photo: Wm. Lawrence]

MR. CHARLES STEWART PARNELL.

a brigade and menaced to be an army. A twelvemonth before, the Irish premier commanded the united allegiance of Ireland and her colonies. To-day Ireland's colony in Great Britain had acclaimed a separatist influence, and was signalling to all the centres of possible disaffection within the Irish borders for allies, or at least for fellow-disturbers. The Irish split had again become a standing headline in the London press. Mr. Parnell had extended his alleged or attempted block to the efficiency of the alien Parliament by a too successful block to the growing unity of his native country. From this date onwards he was to continue in name to assail British supremacy; but it was the freedom of opinion in his own country, the freedom of work and wages in his own country, the peace of classes and the security of every kind of property in his own country, which were to be the targets of the agencies operating under his name.

There was nothing in Mr. Parnell's development which could surprise me. The very qualities which recommended him to me as a tough and censure-proof protagonist of the active policy were calculated to produce much worse effects in Irish than in English politics, should he happen to turn them upon Irish politics. His discontent with his social position, his exaggerated pride in the Parnell name and the Parnell claims, his thirst for personal distinction, his vague sympathy with Ireland as a fellow-sufferer with the Parnells, his disgust at the stuffy two rooms in Keppel Street, Bloomsbury, his wrath at the insolvency of Avondale—all these stings and pricks to an aristocratic leveller made him a parliamentary fighter whom no tone of the House could awe, and whom the notoriety of condemnation encouraged to defiance. I had always thought of him as *etwas katilinish*. A bit of a Catiline does not over-respect established institutions, and there were several established institutions for which I wanted no over-respect. There was not the slightest necessity, nor should there have been the slightest opportunity, for any of those Catilinarian virtues being exercised to the detriment of

any Irish interest or to the detriment of any movement towards Irish unity and brotherhood. I doubt very much if Mr. Parnell saw for a considerable time the attractions which his personality offered to a huge class of agitators in Ireland. They wanted 'a county gentleman.' They got him. I remember that when I came over to the Home Rule Conference at Dublin in the January of 1878 in order to conciliate Mr. Butt, to support unity, and to show the compatibility of active policy with national co-operation, one of the first things which happened to me was a sort of fierce personal attack upon me in a chance meeting, on my part, with an active agitator of the popular sort, who was generally fairly friendly to me. This was Mr. Matthew Harris, afterwards a Parnellite M.P.: a good deal of a rough diamond, capable of passionate errors, but at heart an upright and honourable man, at least outside the agrarian question. He came to the business at express speed. 'Mr. O'Donnell, we hear,' he said, 'that you want to be leader.' I blandly expressed boredom and wonderment. 'Well, if you do, you cannot; that is all. We have chosen the next leader. We are a nation of Catholics, and we want a Protestant. It looks well. We are a nation of peasants, and we want a landlord to head us. It looks well. You are neither a Protestant nor a landlord. Parnell is both.' I inquired if that really was how the cat was jumping down his way. 'Down my way? There is more than County Galway in it. If you ask Pat Egan, or Brennan, or Kettle, or Davitt, they will tell you it is so. You are a very learned man, we hear. You can do good work for us, if you want to. But you are not going to be leader, I go bail.'

I tried to explain to the earnest Mr. Harris that I was quite satisfied with Mr. Butt;—'What, after abusing you!—that Mr. Butt might have some amiable defects, but that he was a noble leader; that, in any case, I did not appreciate having horses taken from my carriage, or being chaired by anybody—the procedure was hot and nasty;—that I preferred a larger field of action, that the essence of the

active policy meant action far outside of Ireland ; that it would not do me the slightest benefit in my ambition to be what he called a leader—which was, I supposed, a man who did what he was told by the most important persons in the County Galway. ‘I tell you we want Parnell.’ ‘Certainly, certainly. Only you cannot have him just yet awhile. And, by the way, do you think that our mutual friend John Bull does not know exactly how much of a Protestant your Parnell may be, and how much of a landlord there is anywhere on the Parnell encumbered estates?’ I only annoyed the excellent Mr. Harris, and shortly after he expressed publicly the opinion that I was a conceited good-for-nothing.

There could be no denying that the cat was jumping that way, not only in Mr. Harris’s native metropolis of Ballinasloe, but here and there in many parts of agitated Ireland. In Dublin there was quite a crowd of the devotees of the ‘county gintleman.’ And Parnell himself had come out in the few months since he had unseated his leader at the Confederation. He stood up with a commanding air to his followers, and his courtiers stood round him with bowed backs. Also the praises of obstruction were on every tongue. Obstruction could do everything. Obstruction was the marvellous panacea for Ireland’s ills. ‘That blessed word Mesopotamia’ never comforted the pious old lady’s heart as that wondrous word obstruction inspired the Parnellite wiseacres in the month of January 1878. It ran round like the South Sea Bubble. When I saw, not very long afterwards, the ease and grace with which Mr. Speaker Brand took the very pick of the performers by the lug, so to speak, and turned them over to the Serjeant-at-Arms and his blue-coated messengers, the temptation was just diabolical to shout and shake with laughter. That was the statecraft that overthrew Home Rule ! Excellent as an advertisement, not without merit as a menace on occasion, obstruction benefited, and could benefit, nobody but a Government that wanted a completely plausible excuse for a deficient crop of sessional legislation. Even while

those Dublin Solomons were gloating over the imaginary discomfiture of England, the ministerial spokesmen in every corner of England, Scotland, and Wales were citing the 'shameless obstruction of a handful of men forgetful of the courtesies of Parliament' as the reason for all deficiencies in the matter of Bills and promises. This is one of the advantages of the rule of the people. When it gets a delusion into its head, it bolts with it faster than a horse that has taken his bit in his teeth. But 'the Dublin men'—quite a small group, really—were confident, and that was enough. Ireland must follow, or the sky must fall. If ever Ireland sees the restoration of the Irish Parliament, there will be, during the first sessions, 'Dublin men' convinced that the first condition of self-government is to have the galleries of the House packed with strong-armed enthusiasts from the Liberties and the Coal Quay, and a select group of Dublin-bred deputies, more or less attired as Robert Emmet, who will receive the admiring attention of the aforesaid galleries, and who will see that the galleries promptly extinguish any deputies who entertain un-Dublin opinions. In fact, Irish self-government will have to borrow some lessons from Mr. Speaker Brand before it can get under way to any good purpose. These are the little ways of popular reformers everywhere, from the Young French of 1789 to the Young Turks, who have already progressed from universal fraternity to courts-martial and ambulatory gibbets, in our day. Nations never understand at the outset of freedom that self-government is far more difficult than any other sort of government whatsoever. All which brings me back to my original astonishment which I have already frequently expressed in these pages: What bee was in Mr. Pitt's bonnet when he suppressed the due working of that Irish Parliament, so full of practical administrators, of careful financiers, of statesmanlike capacities, of superb and stately eloquence, so full, so overwhelmingly full, of tried and stern loyalty and constitutionalism? Imagine, if the human faculties are equal to the effort, imagine Michael Davitt asking a vote in adoption of Henry George from the proud

senators headed by Grattan, Plunket, Saurin, Bushe, Flood, Tottenham ! I suppose there never was, and never will be, a legislature more abounding in every quality of a Conservative and devoted loyalty. Yet Mr. Pitt bribed, and bullied, and broke the pledged word of England, and violated law and Constitution, to get rid of that pillar of State and Church ; just in order to enjoy at Westminster the society of Mr. O'Connell and Mr. Parnell, and my own fascinating society ! It was complimentary to us, surely, and yet I could wish, and many others could wish, he had never paid the compliment.

It is not necessary to give minute details of the Home Rule Conference which was held in Dublin in the middle of January 1878. It showed that the vast majority of the Home Rulers of Ireland were in favour of Mr. Butt's leadership, and were also desirous of increased vigour and energy in confronting the hostility of English governing classes. But there was also a strong element of men who appeared to be hypnotised by the magic word obstruction. Mr. Butt made a passionately eloquent appeal for unity, which now meant the restoration of unity ; but only obtained from Parnell a repetition of the old and vague complaints of the necessity of giving no quarter to England and making the English Parliament's unhappy life miserable. The more vaguely declamatory were Mr. Parnell's declarations, the more enthusiastic grew the select groups of the hypnotised. Personally, I had an opportunity of praising Butt as the inventor and founder of an active policy for Ireland, and of sketching out such an increase of activity as would be only a completion and extension of Mr. Butt's own policy : in other words, I aimed at removing the old leader's just jealousy by placing the active policy, which in its true sense I alone had introduced, under his banner and under his direction. I made a special appeal to Irishmen to extend their activity, even if it were merely to check British complacency, so as to make India the ward of Ireland's guardianship. I reminded the great assembly that the troops of the East India Company which had won India

for the British Crown were preponderatingly Irish and often Irish-speaking ; and I claimed that the native liberties which Irish bayonets had overthrown should become on that account especially sacred to Irish patriots and statesmen. I often attributed to his American blood the slight attention which Parnell paid to everything which seemed to him to be beyond the colour line. Indians, Armenians, Syrians, Egyptians were very much even as niggers.

As a matter of fact, Mr. Butt's speeches and letters on Parnell's proceedings and allegations proved conclusively that the whole field of the true active policy was well within the circle of Irish statesmanship as defined by general consent. What Butt denounced was obstruction, whether by the monotonous repetition and misuse of the forms of the House, by the irrelevant interpolation of pseudo-national issues into the discussion of irrelevant matters, and the histrionic manufacture of scenic displays for the purpose of playing to the silliness of the Parnellite gallery. After a time, as we shall see, even that gallery got to understand the true import of those scenic manufactures ; and Mr. Parnell, after getting himself suspended by Mr. Speaker, found himself sceptically asked in Dublin : ' What he had again done that thrick for ? '

I have no objection (said Butt), I never had an objection, to Irish members taking part in the discussion of English and Imperial affairs. I have even held that they did not take a part often enough. We should do something for the sufferers of wrong throughout the Empire. What I object to, what I hold to be fatal to the dignity and usefulness of the Irish party, and to the good name of Ireland throughout the world, is obviously making our intervention in matters of English or Imperial concern merely a manifestation of a certain Irish policy without regard to the matter in hand and the interests involved.

This was true, statesmanlike, practical, and infinitely better calculated to thwart, baffle, and annoy our British enemies than any irrelevant and pseudo-national obstruction whatever. To handle an Indian grievance, for instance, in the interest of India, with knowledge of Indian opinion, with

the help of Indian opinion and advice, how infinitely more dangerous to the wrongdoers, arraigned before the civilised world, than that contemptible counterfeit called obstruction! Who was really impressed, or who was really endangered, by the scenic exhibition of a belligerent Irishman declaring that he cared nothing about India, but that he was executing a war-dance to show his detestation of the Act of Union between Great Britain and Ireland? Of course, the latter performance was much the easier for a gentleman of little love of study and abundant absence of information. The Parnellite gallery, however, thought a somersault or a cartwheel 'under the nose of the Speaker' was incomparably more national and patriotic than any amount of intelligent intervention on behalf of suffering or oppression. I could carry out every item of the active policy under Butt's formula of action. Parnell could not, because he was ignorant, idle, and ambitious; and his ambition coupled with his ignorance selected the line of activity which produced scenic manifestations instead of the extension of Irish influence throughout the Empire. 'How Parnell thramples on their rules and regulations,' shouted his delighted Dublin men. 'What is O'Donnell saying about learning to understand and help the Indians? Who the divil wants to understand the Indians? It's Parnell with his fut on the House of Commons we want to see.' Mr. T. M. Healy was considered at a later stage of the controversy to have achieved a monumental success in dubbing me 'an Imperialist crank.' All which did not prevent Mr. Speaker Brand from lifting the heroes by the ear out of the House of Commons, on which institution Parnell had totally failed to 'set his fut.' Mr. Parnell, seeing that the vast majority of the Conference supported Butt, declined to formulate more clearly either a complaint or a policy. 'He refrained,' he said, 'from asking the country to-day, by the voice of this Conference, to adopt any particular line of policy.' If caution be a form of courage, he did well to be so brave. It took the violence of the Land League and, above all, the colossal ineptitude of her

Majesty's Government, to make Parnell for a season the absolutist misgovernor of Ireland. In the absence of the Land League, I am convinced that he would have amended his action to suit the Home Rule programme once more ; and, if he had become the successor of Butt, it would have been as the chief of the original party, invigorated by combat, not divided by projects of semi-Socialism and demoralised by the boycott and its consequences. Even as it was, there was a notable effort on his part to free his interventions in English politics from the gratuitous provocations and challengings which had menaced disaster to the very policy he was endeavouring to support. His speeches, 160 in number, on the abolition of flogging and general amendment of the Mutiny Act were a great monument of diligence as well as of humanitarianism of the best kind. I had learned to forget and almost forgive his treachery to Butt, when the leadership of the Land League, offered to him and accepted, broke up the fraternal bond which had united so many Irishmen of different classes and creeds, and inaugurated the chaos which Ireland is again to-day.

Before proceeding to relate the chief event of the Irish year in 1878, the consultation with the representative envoys of the Fenian Organisations of Ireland and America, it is important to note the attitude of the Catholic Church in Ireland towards Home Rule and the active policy both, at the time of the second Home Rule Conference. There can be no doubt that the leading archbishops and bishops had not altered the decorous hostility which they had revealed at the time of the O'Connell centenary, when all the clerical forces had endeavoured to substitute Lord O'Hagan for Butt at the celebration of the day. I have never been able to blame the churchmen for their governmental attitude in Irish politics. It is inculcated upon them by the highest authority of the Church ; and to those who know the history of Europe since the French Revolution the friendly relations which have usually existed between the Holy See and the British Government are both natural and inevitable. Together, the Protestant Kingdom and

the Catholic Pontificate faced the deadliest assaults of the French Republic and the French Empire. Together, they reaped the harvest which followed Waterloo. The restoration of England's position in the commerce of Europe, to mention but one consequence of the French downfall, was not more directly due to the successful war which had been waged in company, though with differing weapons, than was the restoration of the Roman States to the sovereignty of the popes. The grateful Pontiff, Pius VII, had immediately granted to the British monarch the right of veto on all elections to the Irish Episcopate; and, in spite of popular disturbance, the concession has never been recalled. By the solemn act of the Holy See which placed Ireland under the jurisdiction of the Congregation of Propaganda, a fundamental condition of the candidature of every suitor for an Irish bishopric was declared to be 'faithful allegiance to the monarch of the British Empire.' I have heard from a venerable and venerated prelate that he considered himself bound by his consecration obligations to aid the British Government in any reasonable demand for assistance in a political matter, quite apart from religious interests, provided it was nothing against religion or the Church. The history of a hundred years contains nothing but proofs of the concern of the churchmen for the security of British rule in Ireland. All the thunders of excommunication were hurled at the rebels of 1798. The attempted rising in 1848 was combated by the Catholic clergy. All members of the Fenian Brotherhood were refused the Sacraments in 1866 and 1867. On the other hand, successive popes have emulously declared that the clergy enjoy rights and franchises under British authority which they would vainly seek under the governments of Catholic nations. To barter such guarantees for the possible legislation of a National Assembly, even under a lay Catholic Cabinet on College Green, naturally appears to the Vatican and its loyal Episcopate as a dangerous gamble with the unknown. The care of the Church rests with the clergy. Could it be safer than under the Union and the Union

Parliament? Nationalists are unjust to ignore these primary truths of Church administration in Ireland.

The chronic attitude of the hierarchy and clergy being fidelity to the British connexion, they are hardly to be blamed for hesitating to support a national movement which they believed to be hostile to that connexion. At this time three of the four archbishops were distinctly opposed to Mr. Butt—namely, Archbishop McCabe of Dublin, McGettigan of Armagh, and McHale of Tuam, though McHale was believed to be still a sort of repealer on the O'Connellite model. The only archbishop who tended towards Home Rule was Croke of Cashel, who had been a Young Irelander in his youth; and it required the direct pressure of the Vatican to restrain his announcement of advanced opinions. It was he who, four years later, started the Parnell subscription in answer to Mr. Forster's accusations in the House of Commons, and he was very severely wigged by the Pope, Leo XIII, in consequence. The general body of the senior clergy were emphatically moderate men, true to the course laid down by their clerical superiors. There was more profession of Nationalism among the curates and younger clergy; but it is well understood to be part of the harmless, parochial duty of the curate to be more national than his seniors, for policy's sake and popularity. Always, when it comes to a crisis, the bishop has the senior priests, and they have the juniors with few exceptions. 'My priests march at the word of command like a regiment,' said a French cardinal archbishop. The very nature and mission of the Catholic Church forbids any alternative. It is the united action of the clergy which is her special pride. In the case of Butt, there was a special objection on the part of the clerical chiefs. Butt and the Home Rulers, while full of respect for religion, were a lay party; and they wanted, as a primary article of their programme, to induce or encourage the Irish gentry, mostly Protestants, to side with their countrymen and enter national politics. If the Irish gentry had crowded into national politics, they would have exercised an

immense influence in their districts, instead of being separated from the population by their British opinions. The prospect did not, and could not, please the bulk of the priests. They wanted no more Protestants in power. There were too many already. But the gentry reconciled, and leading the nation! 'It would be the establishment of the Protestant Church over again,' said priests of the greatest experience and the shrewdest calculation—that is to say, it would place in every county a free leadership. There were many priests who rejoiced at the appearance of a new party called Obstructives and Revolutionists; just because their terrific reputation and disloyal associations would confirm the Protestant gentry in habits of abstention and absenteeism. If we place ourselves at the point of view of the earnest and devoted country clergyman, who thinks of religion alone, it is unjust to blame him for thinking of what he profoundly believes to be the interest of religion. If the gentry were a great Catholic aristocracy, as in the Rhineland, or Spain, or Bohemia, the Irish Catholic clergy would be territorial Conservatives to a man. You do not catch German or Austrian priests and rural deans communing with social democrats on the vast estates of Prince Fürstenberg or Prince Schwartzenburg. Neither would you find in Germany or Austria a territorial aristocracy—Catholic or Protestant—which had been taught to prefer the interests of some neighbouring country to their own. Even if the priests tried on Rhine and Danube to raise the cry of 'Friends of the Foreigner!' every *Bauer* and *Landmann*—every hedger and ditcher—knows that count and baron, knight and squire, are as thick-and-thin patriots and fellow-countrymen as themselves. That made a long difference between Rhineland or Donauland and the shores of the Shannon and the Boyne on the eve of the new social war.

I suppose that I had at that time as good opportunities as any for examining and estimating the opinions of the Irish clergy towards political and social questions. I

had been intimately acquainted for many years with Cardinal Cullen—always lunching or dining with His Eminence, on passing through Dublin, in the dingy mansion in Eccles Street. The Archbishop-designate of Tuam had been for ten years my Father-confessor. The Bishop and clergy of Waterford, the Bishop of Dromore at Belfast, the politico-literary clergy of Dublin—such as Father Daniel, who, as the Cardinal's spokesman, conducted religious politics in the *Freeman's Journal*—were known familiarly. Monsignor Woodlock, rector of the Catholic University, was an old friend. I had been lecturer in political economy for his university, and had precisely taken the famous Christian Socialist, Professor and Cabinet-minister Von Schäffle's 'Socialism and Capitalism' as my text-book. I could nowhere perceive much admiration for the Home Rule party or desire for Irish self-government. An agrarian movement which would shake the Protestant gentry out of their saddles might interest them. For the rest, they were mostly content to say polite nothings about 'Ireland, the Martyr Nation' and cultivate faithful allegiance to the monarch of the British Empire. I am not sure that even the British Empire has been permanently benefited by their well-meaning loyalty; but I am quite convinced that what they believe to be the good of their religion is such an engrossing and supreme motive with the Irish Catholic clergy that no party and no government can count upon their support except with a view to religion above all. I totally disagree with the Nationalists who blame the clergy for being clerical. If the Nationalists do not at any time, under Butt, or Shaw, or Parnell, choose to follow the clergy in secular politics, surely they can adopt their own course without loss of temper. It is certainly not to be expected from a religious community that it will abandon connexions which have been most profitable to the creed merely for sentimental considerations of a thoroughly subordinate value in its eyes.

The sort of drawn battle at the Conference, where

Parnell did not openly attack and did not say a word of withdrawal, the social rather than political aspirations of the clergy, and the abiding discord between the owners and cultivators of land, were the leading features of the Irish situation at the opening of Parliament in 1878. That session was to be much less sensational as regards Irish incidents than its predecessor, though no session, perhaps, has ever done more permanent injury to the Irish people, inasmuch as it produced 'the Act for making Irish youth good for nothing'—the so-called 'Intermediate Education (Ireland) Act.' It was a stirring and agitated session for England and the Empire. It saw the last Turkish army defeated before Constantinople and the Russian army within easy range of the city of the Sultan, the British fleet at Besika Bay and the Indian troops at Malta, the gratuitous picking of an unjust quarrel with the Amir Sher Ali and the march of an Anglo-Indian army upon Kabul. A wild panic indeed broke out in political circles in the first week of February, when the seizure of Constantinople by the Russians was believed for some hours. I was calling at the *Morning Post*, when the proprietor, Mr. Borthwick, entered in undisguised alarm. 'There is dreadful news,' he said to us. 'Count Schuvalof said half an hour ago at an at-home, when somebody was speaking of the Russians being before Constantinople, *Constantinople! Nous y sommes déjà.*' So the war of talk at Westminster raged along with the big and little wars outside, but there appeared to be a certain relaxation of effort among the Home Rulers. The relaxation was in some respects real as well as apparent. Parnell's intrigues against the leader, and the pain and annoyance of Mr. Butt aggravating his rapidly weakening health, caused the sort of calm which is often followed by tempest. In some respects there was very serious work in progress. The foundations of the co-operation between Irish forces on both sides of the Atlantic were being laid with more haste than wisdom, but were already full of promises, or menaces, of the coming catastrophes in Irish social life

and conditions. In the first place, there was the joint consultation between the active parliamentarians and the Fenian delegates of Ireland and America. As Parnell and I were the representatives of the active policy at the meeting, I shall relate in full an event which had some unforeseen consequences, and which has never been described down to the present. Before, however, dealing with this matter, a scene deserves explanation which occurred in the House of Commons on April 12, in reference to the proceedings of the constabulary force in Donegal after the murder of the Earl of Leitrim. This was a peculiarly desperate and cold-blooded crime. The Earl was on a car driven by a driver named Buchanan, accompanied by a clerk named Meekins, when, while passing through a plantation called Cratlaugh Wood, only five miles from the county town of Milford in Donegal, the whole party were shot dead by ambuscaded assassins. The murder was carefully prepared. I have heard that the assassins were chosen sharpshooters, sent from a great distance, who crossed the neighbouring Mulroy Bay in a waiting boat immediately after the deed, and were helped by various agencies to seaports, from which they reached the Continent and subsequently America. It will be remembered that Sir Michael Hicks-Beach, in supporting the Coercion Bill introduced by the Government in 1874, had dwelt upon the formidable organisation of Ribbonmen, which he declared to exist in such force as to require the severe provisions of the proposed law.

Numerous complaints reached me, however, of the coarseness and brutality with which the constabulary were treating the local population in their investigations. The authorities in Dublin had hastened to make the district round Milford a "proclaimed district, merely because the crime had occurred near Milford. It would be at least as reasonable to put the East End under martial law because a sailor had been murdered in Wapping. All the evidence showed a deliberate crime of conspiracy, and it is the ABC of sound detective knowledge, confirmed by

a thousand examples, to ascribe such a deed to agents from a distance who would be helped to return to a distance as quickly as possible. The Dublin authorities, however, on the suspicion that it was an agrarian matter and possibly a local affair, simply abolished all the rights of the subject in Donegal. There were house searchings, perquisitions, menaces, quartering constabulary on the poor ratepayer; there were semi-military police breaking into every farmhouse, into every room. The whole of the most respectable inhabitants were treated as dangerous classes. As an O'Donnell, intimately associated with Donegal, numbers of the poor people sent their complaints to me. It was quite probable that the crime was agrarian, for the dead man was a remorseless and vindictive tyrant over his tenants, but that was noway certain. There might be other causes of vengeance. I was assured that there were notorious causes besides. A mass of evidence was sent me, including public denunciations of the dead man by such a responsible and weighty organ as the *Londonderry Standard*, the representative paper of the respectable and influential body of Presbyterians of Derry and Donegal.

I asked the Government if, before finally assuming that local agrarian relations were the sole cause of the crime, they had examined the charges of the *Standard*. Instead of terrorising the respectable people on the spot, were the Government searching further afield? Lord Leitrim's life touched several counties. Why suppose that only the neighbourhood of Milford was implicated? Perhaps, while they were worrying and oppressing Milford, the real criminals were already far away, and were escaping all pursuit.

I received unsatisfactory answers which seemed to me to be loaded with a double amount of official discourtesy. I proceeded to explain the situation by quoting the description of the dead man's life given in the Irish Presbyterian press. At once a storm of protest and denunciation! The exclusion of the reporters from the Press Gallery was moved and carried, in order to prevent my letting the

London public know what the Presbyterians of Ireland wrote and knew! When it was seen that Mr. Gladstone and Lord Hartington—entirely on grounds of public policy—were voting against the exclusion of the press, the young bloods of the Tory party vigorously booed and hooted the distinguished English statesmen. Of course, some Irish members excelled any Englishmen in denouncing my interposition in defence of the harried people of Donegal; one poor fellow, who got a Government situation a few months afterwards, shouting that I ‘was dragging the cause of Ireland through the mire in order to build up my own reputation.’ The old comradeship on the field of fight was renewed between Parnell and me on that occasion, Parnell defending me with fierce and gallant energy. Of course, there could not be the slightest guilt shown against the people of Milford, and the blundering constabulary had let the real assassins embark without disturbance or pursuit at the other end of the country. I received the warmest thanks not only from the Irish press, but from numbers of private persons, including several Protestant ministers of religion. On the other hand, the general run of the English press assailed me quite in the tone of the zealous Irishman quoted above. If the affair had been in England, every circumstance relating to everybody even remotely concerned would be reported with detail and complacency. I was a mere Irish member defending a mere Irish district and population.

The invitation to meet the Fenian delegates at a joint conference—‘the voice and sword’ we called it jestingly—had been expected for a long time. The Home Rule Confederation, of which I was still vice-president, was full of men who had taken the Fenian vow in the days of Head Centre Stephens, and of younger men whose initiation was less remote. I always found the men of Fenian leanings the most honest, the most truthful, the most considerate and courteous. They were also, as a rule, the most reasonable. Very few of them would refuse a peaceful arrangement with England on terms of real

restoration of self-government in Ireland. A great number of them were on the best footing with English fellow-workmen. I remember Mr. Cowen, M.P. of Newcastle, speaking of two leading Fenian confederates who lived near him, said their 'homes were models of the cultured workman's home.' Among all these men I had been preaching for years the unwisdom of sullen and useless abstention, in the expectation of a military rising which never came. 'Let them make use of legal and constitutional means. They could go back to the insurrectionary policy if legal methods brought no redress. But let them try union and co-operation in civil organisation and policy. Everything won, was so much progress made.' I used to sum up my doctrine in their regard in the two sentences :—

' Utilise everything ;
' Occupy everywhere.'

While I always sought to apply Fenianism to the winning of civil rights—without, of course, presuming to deny any right of a nation—Parnell's main system appeared to be a thinly veiled invocation of physical force, for which he always avoided responsibility, as he always remembered most gratefully when he found himself very much out of his reckoning. That was really due, I am certain, to a real vacillation which he hid by a certain brusqueness ; and nothing was finer about him than his hot anger at any depreciation of bravery shown for Ireland or any insulting confusion of patriotism with vulgar crime.

The Conference with the Fenian leaders was arranged to take place at the Surrey Hotel, Surrey Street, Strand ; and there Parnell and I met Mr. John O'Leary, delegate from Ireland, and Dr. Carroll of Philadelphia, delegate from America. I understood that the Fenian organisation in America had become the Clann-na-Gael, while the Fenianism of Ireland had remained the Irish Republican Brotherhood. Mr. John O'Leary, after penal servitude and exile for the Fenian rising, was now a singularly noble-looking man, aquiline-featured, dark-eyed, tall, in

the prime of his life. He looked a scholar who wore a sword. Every man who ever knew John O'Leary, whether English or Irish, Nationalist or Irish Tory—he had studied in Trinity College, Dublin—respected his honourable character. Dr. Carroll looked the prosperous physician and the Americanised Irishman; about the middle height and squarely made; with keen, calm face, vigilant and cold. I thought that I had caught sight in an ante-room of Mr. John Ryan of Marylebone, reputed head of the Fenians of the London district, and I concluded that he had charge of the arrangements for preventing spying or interruption. A few months before I had been honoured with an invitation, which introduced me into the presence of a secret council of a Rhineland Catholic Committee, whose objects were the smuggling to and fro across the Rhine of priests required to administer the sacrament but prohibited by Prussian law, the hiding of priests under sentence of imprisonment, the collection of money and other resources, the organisation of the fitting reception for Prussian officials who presumed to bray overloud in 'the Rhine land, the wine land, the land of iron faith.' On that occasion they were organising a little demonstration which required a few thousand 'good lookers-on.' Our Fenian hosts used fewer preparations, but they were probably adequate.

As I expected also, I found myself asked to explain to the Fenian leaders how I considered that the two policies, the policy of insurrection and the active or obstructive policy of parliamentarianism, however the thing was called, could co-operate. The Fenians, especially Mr. John O'Leary, seemed frankly sceptical. Parnell referred them to me. Parnell did not favour giving explanations. In the first place, he was an opportunist. In the second place, he had no clear ideas whatever, except that you could squeeze a lot out of English politicians, if you were either troublesome enough or utilisable enough. Thirdly, he thought the Fenians would have a higher idea of him in leaving them to think that he could speak, if he would. In all which three points he was not unwise. As I merely wanted

to tell them what was good for them, whether they liked it or not, I began the explanation in this wise. 'You wish to know, gentlemen, how an insurrectionary party and a constitutional but masculine policy can co-operate? The simplest thing in the world. While you are waiting for your insurrection, do what you can in every ordinary direction to make Ireland more prosperous, more free, more Nationalist, more ready for anything which might turn up. This is the year 1877. The last Fenian shot was fired in 1867. Is it not a pity to do nothing for another ten years except wait for another tenth anniversary?' This took Dr. Carroll, the vigilant, keen man. 'But,' he objected, 'Fenians cannot violate their principles. We cannot take parliamentary oaths of allegiance.' I said with a laugh to carry off the daring saying: 'You might do worse. You have taken an oath of citizenship to the United States, I believe, and you have renounced thereby the name and the claim of Irishman. Wait, wait, I am only arguing. You are bound to bombard College Green, if the United States order you.' 'The United States will never order us.' 'Is that the question? We were speaking of oaths. I do not find that allegiance to the King, whom I only recognise as constitutional King of Ireland and not of any United Kingdom, in any way interferes with my Irish Nationalism.' 'Well, let us drop that; and you, mister, explain the rest of what you mean.'

I went on to say that 'while they were waiting to insurrect,' the Fenians, if they really loved Ireland, not only could, but should, assist the Irish cause in every walk of life and on every occasion. There were all kinds of departments and municipal boards in Ireland,—and I expected that popular reforms in Parliament would increase the popular character of those Irish boards. Were not Fenian Irishmen bound to promote the election of honest, capable, Nationalist candidates in preference to mere time-servers and place-hunters? If a hundred Fenian votes could elect an honest man, were they 'to wait for an insurrection' and let a rotten member get the place? If they did, they

would be more responsible than the British Government for the result. So long as Ireland was governed at London—I hoped the time would not be long as much as they did—would it not be better to have representatives who would speak like Irishmen, rather than have ministerial hacks and flatterers? If they could associate the name of Ireland with help to the suffering and overworked among the English people, would they not be aiding the cause of their country by making her name popular among the masses? Were they not bound to do all in their power to redress the wrongs of subjugated countries who had no other voices to speak for them? Did they cease to be Nationalists by defending India?

Mr. O'Leary interposed: 'But, Mr. O'Donnell, you do not seem to know that even if an Irishman enters the British Parliament with honest intentions, in nine cases in ten he will be corrupted before very long. If he does not get corrupted in London, he will in Dublin. We have all seen scores of Irishmen, who, when once they got drawn into the whirlpool of British corruption in Dublin, the West British society, the jobbery, and servility, very soon all the manliness went out of them. If Irishmen are to save their honour, they must keep aloof from everything English.' 'What! Even from English literature, Mr. O'Leary?' I knew that Mr. O'Leary was an ardent and cultivated student of the beautiful in English and French. But he replied quickly: 'If England had only Shakespeare and Milton and the rest, the Fenians would not be against her. It is her Cromwells and Castlereaghs, and that vile brood, which are the trouble.' 'Very well answered, Mr. O'Leary. But, if you were an Edmund Burke, you would defend the oppressed Indians, and make things unpleasant for Warren Hastings?' But Mr. O'Leary was again victorious. 'If the Indians gave the English just a touch of Brian Boru, that would be better than any Edmund Burke in or out of Parliament.' 'I am afraid that Mr. O'Donnell has no chance against you, Mr. O'Leary,' said Parnell. Half relenting, Mr. O'Leary added, 'I am not

saying that good members would not be better than bad ones, if they could keep right. George Henry Moore meant well.' Brian Boru, I may tell English readers, is an Irish hero who drove the Danes out of his country.

We discussed many things for a long time. Dr. Carroll put very clearly and with dignity the danger to Nationalist Irishmen of seeming to compromise themselves to no purpose, if a movement of co-operation ended in failure or disgrace. I confessed to him that there was just the weak point. The Fenians might help a fair-promising party, and find themselves wrecked on an underhand treaty with an English ministry. In fact, that is just what happened. But the Fenians need not have been misled, if they had not chosen to blindfold themselves first. Plainly, also, I was not able to win over Dr. Carroll for a real conciliation between Ireland and England even were England to grant our demands. He had the fierce longing for revenge, and wanted not only to benefit Ireland, but to injure England. 'That,' I said, 'is an incompatibility. You cannot have England compensating Ireland, and Ireland pretending to be conciliated, but hiding a dagger up her sleeve. History cannot be made that way.'

Practically I got no help from Parnell, and I was told that, alone with the Fenian delegates, he remarked, 'O'Donnell is a great believer in parliamentary methods,' which, in the sense he conveyed, he knew was the reverse of the immaculate verity. He was slippery, was Parnell. But not more slippery than his serving-men.

After the conference I had a good deal of further explanation with Dr. Carroll alone. I told him plainly that if England meant well by Ireland, I should be in favour of doing well to England. 'But if she makes you wait too long?' 'Dr. Carroll, if England makes us wait too long, it is my opinion that she will lose, perhaps most, both internally and externally.' He remained more unconvinced than myself. 'Would I write, under short heads, the proposals I made at the conference?' He was staying at No. 11 Arundel Street, Strand, and I was at 8 Serjeants'

Inn, Fleet Street ; I brought the paper to him in a few hours. It was the following :—

WHAT NATIONALISTS COULD DO

1. In the first place, Nationalists, meaning all who reject the so-called Act of Union, should take possession of all local boards of administration, town councils, and similar bodies. Here they could also show that honesty and capacity were on the side of nationality.
2. Even if all Nationalists were unwilling to enter the British Parliament—of course protesting against it—they should support the active members who demanded self-government and protected Irish material and intellectual interests. Abstention, whenever it let in an enemy of Ireland where a friend of Ireland could have been chosen, was practically equivalent to voting for Pitt and Castlereagh.
3. Federal Home Rule had this vast advantage over mere repeal or separation, that it promoted the unity and co-operation between the Irish in Ireland and the Irish in the British Dominions outside of Ireland—that is, in the Colonies and England—who could often help one another by vote and influence.
4. Never to forget that there are to-day at least as many Irish in the British Dominions outside of Ireland as the entire population of Ireland itself, and that everything which cuts off their countries-of-residence from Ireland separates 5,000,000 Celtic National Irishmen from 5,000,000 Celtic National Irishmen.
5. Not to forget that, in spite of the hospitality of the United States towards Irishmen (Germans, Italians, Spaniards, Scandinavians also), there is not, and there never can be, any recognition of Ireland as a nation, either in the name of the United States, or its flag, or its coat of arms, or any of its official emblems or departments.

An Irishman in the United States is a common American citizen.

6. On the contrary, the British Constitution is still full of recognitions of the Irish country and nation. It is not only that there is still a viceroy of Ireland as before the Union. The King is officially and constitutionally not the King of England, but of Ireland

as well as Great Britain. The British flag shows the cross of St. Patrick along with the crosses of St. Andrew and St. George. In the Royal Standard itself the GOLDEN HARP OF IRELAND is displayed along with the Lion of Scotland and the Leopards of England.

These distinctions mean an immensity for Ireland at every Royal and Imperial Court in Europe.

7. Consider what it would be for Irishmen in the United States, if there were the SUNBURST OF IRELAND on the eagle shield of the United States, the HARP OF IRELAND among the stars of the Star-spangled Banner.
8. Every generation tends to efface the name of Irishman in the United States, but Irishmen, Irish nationality, the Harp of Ireland, the royal name of Ireland, will be in the British Constitution so long as the British Constitution endures.

Every Irish colonist at Sydney, at Melbourne, at Toronto, at Montreal, at Quebec, at Cape Town, sees the emblems of Ireland on every British flag throughout the world.

9. Always to try to make use of what exists before trying to destroy it.
10. Always to remember that our Irish Protestant countrymen are not Roman Catholics, and have a right to a government free from Catholic sectarianism, and have a right to guarantees for their liberty, religion, and property.
11. Always to remember that even when it is necessary to oppose Irish Protestants, the opposition should be carefully confined to what is absolutely necessary for the just defence of national interests.
12. Always to remember that Nationalists, for the sake of Grattan and the Volunteers, Robert Emmet, Thomas Davis, and a thousand others, are specially bound to protect Irish Protestant rights by constant vigilance and active defence.

Abstention in the face of injustice is both useless and mean.

13. When Irish Protestants know by experience that they can trust the Irish Catholics with their liberties and properties, they will cease to be afraid of an Irish national legislature ; and not till then.
14. Always to remember that, besides the ordinary con-

siderations of human and divine justice, India has sacred claims to Irish sympathy, because it was Irish soldiers, Irish regiments, and often Irish generals and statesmen who deprived India of her native government and independence.

The Fenian delegate from America did not accept these principles, nor any of them. He asked merely for heads of my policy. I do not know if he looked twice at the paper, or once. I do not know if he ever showed it to the Council of the Clann-na-Gael. Very possibly, when he noted as much as he thought worth any notice, he made a summary for his report, and cast away a paper which contained so many views which he was not accustomed to admire. I have never dreamed of leading my countrymen at home or abroad, at least since I came to the use of reason. I have influenced them often, generally in the direction opposite to my counsels and advice. I have influenced them sometimes on the exact plan by which Pat steered his pig. But I understood them. I told them whither they were going. I made my study and knowledge of them a fundamental element in the larger policy which I have pursued with the help of very different allies.

I do not imply the slightest want of intelligence or honesty on the part of my countrymen. But it is practically impossible to make practical combatants, or even correct theorists, of a people of so-called Nationalists, who think that they are devotedly Nationalist, and who know absolutely nothing about their nation's history. It would make a good introduction to this narrative to show that nearly the whole of the firmest facts of the Nationalist orator are absolute fictions. Mr. Parnell had qualified himself for the leadership of the Irish race at home and abroad by the most careful and systematic ignorance of the history of his country, ancient, medieval, modern, and contemporary. His countrymen shared his estimation of the national annals. He and they knew no Irish history when I met them first in politics. He and they were in the same blissful condition when Parnell's chequered

career of useless omnipotence ended in one of the basest betrayals ever inflicted on a chief by his vowed and thousand-fold vowed and sworn followers. In 1885, the very year that I quitted Parliament for the Continent, when he was on the flood-tide of apparent triumph, and was about to negotiate with Mr. Gladstone on the historical rights of Ireland, he did not know the amount of a child's primer of the history of Ireland. Under this year I find the following account of the request of a Cork society to Parnell for a lecture on Irish history, and what came of it.¹ A prominent Parnellite, Mr. Horgan, is the narrator :—

Mr. Parnell stayed with me in January 1885. The Young Ireland Society asked him to deliver a lecture on Irish history. He consented. Afterwards he said to me, *I really do not know anything about Irish history. Have you got any books I can read?* I knew as little about Irish history as he did, but I fished out some books for him.

Dr. Carroll, the representative of the Clann-na-Gael, had impressed me with the white-hot intensity of his hatred of England. I have often noticed the same quality of almost superhuman loathing and detestation of the sister kingdom in many Irishmen from America. I heard afterwards that Dr. Carroll had expressed approval of the dynamite campaign started by Patrick Ford's partisans. I do not think that, at any rate, the Irish American I saw meant indiscriminate destruction of a civilian population. But his feeling towards England resembled nothing so much as the feelings of a Russian Nihilist towards the Government of the Tsar. Nor, as I have said, was his sentiment an isolated example. I ascribed this quality of American Fenianism to the fact that the Irish in America were, above all, the personal victims of the Black Famine; and I regard the famine in Ireland in 1846 and 1847, as I have mentioned already, as *the* instance of colossal and inexcusable wrongdoing and neglect, practically amounting to wholesale fiendishness, unparalleled in the history of

¹ *Life of Parnell*, by R. Barry O'Brien, vol ii, p. 39.

modern nations. This year of 1878, there came to me another witness to the effects of the Black Famine upon the minds of its survivors who escaped to America. It was shortly after the scene of the exclusion of the press from the House in the question of the proclamation of the Milford district after the murder of Lord Leitrim. It was the end of the week, and I was tired, when a visitor found me at home. It was a Mr. O'Doran from an American middle state. He said that he had called in consequence of my defence of the Donegal people, though he was not a Donegal man. He wished to have a long talk with me on Ireland. He was a handsome, gentlemanly man, somewhat over middle age, fresh and young in aspect, with some Yankee intonations in his voice, but with the soft accent clinging to his tongue of the Irish south. I said I was extremely sorry, but I was too tired for conversation. Could he call next week, as I was going to the seaside for a couple of days? 'And so am I,' he cried. 'Will you accept a returned countryman's invitation? I am going down to Brighton to-morrow. Will you come with us?' After some further remarks I accepted with great pleasure. The next day he tooled me down to Brighton on his four-in-hand, and for three days I was his guest. Not quite a millionaire, he was very rich, as we reckon. We became very friendly during the fortnight he remained in London. I lunched him one day at the Star and Garter, Richmond. Looking over the lovely terrace view, he said :—

Let me tell you my history. Here, as you see me, I am a man who lived through the Black '47 in West Cork. Lived when all my people died. We had a good farm, some forty acres. My uncle was a priest. I had got a good education, some Latin too. There were father and mother, two sisters, two brothers. The blight came. Nearly all our land was potato. Some acres were corn. When the potato perished, the landlord took the corn. There were thousands of acres of corn, good food—too good for the Irish, it was thought. We were starving, and we were such fools as not to take the corn. We were starving. A sister was dead of typhus. We cried for relief. The British Government said that the starving Irish

might get yallow meal to fill them a bit, but they must quit their farms first. Mother died after father had given up the farm in order to get her yallow meal. The other sister died by the roadside, with chewed nettles in her mouth. My brothers went on the relief works, making roads nowhere, instead of tilling the farm. I never heard of them. My uncle's housekeeper had a bit of money. She gave me some food, and got me a job with a Cork dealer. I put together the price of a passage to America, helped by her with two pounds. It was an awful passage. Overcrowded with families, and men, and helpless girls. The sailors were devils. A dozen of the girls went on the streets of New York. Girls as innocent as the saints of God. I prospered. The bit of education helped. I brought the old housekeeper out, and kept her like a mother, in memory of my dead mother. What the poor Irish suffered for years and years at all the hard work of America, though the Americans were often kind, no pen can tell or has told. Misery was no name for the life of scores of thousands. And now I am what you call an estated gentleman. And I have had tea on the terrace of the House of Commons. And I am lunching on this terrace. And, O God, every day of my life, I curse the England that murdered father, and mother, and all the family, and little Winnie, the little sister who died with the chewed nettles in her mouth!

There were hundreds of thousands with memories like that, scattered through the mighty Union, the great Republic. And not only they, but their sons, and their sons' sons hated England with as deep a hate. Ireland was on the brink of some of the consequences of that Irish-American hate.

As I have said, Mr. Parnell let me do the explanation, and after the conference, as I was told, he supplied the commentary. Mr. Parnell's best biographer,¹ who got to know something of the joint conference, writes that 'Parnell, silent as he was, and possibly somewhat because of his silence, produced a very great effect upon everyone present.' Well, he certainly did not win the support either of Mr. John O'Leary or Dr. Carroll, or the real heads of the Fenian organisations. He never

¹ Mr. R. Barry O'Brien.

got much more than the 'Fenian Ribbonmen,' until an English Premier ordered his followers to desert him, and ordered Ireland to choose a new leader, while the churchmen blessed the treason out of the moral theology. Then the Fenians fought for Parnell proscribed by London and Maynooth. Immediately after the joint conference Parnell said to me: 'The Fenians want to catch us, but they are not going to'; from which I concluded that Parnell was going to remain strictly Parnellite. Not that I blame him for failing to see eye to eye with the Fenian leaders. It is utterly impossible to arrive at more than temporary arrangements with a secret organisation—no matter in what country of Europe—where there cannot be free discussion, nor clear responsibility, nor the sifting and winnowing of intelligent opinion, but only a clumsy imitation of the orderly-room and the barrack-room applied to public affairs. Whether at Dublin or Salonica, a public government and an occult government cannot work. *Ce-ci tuera ce-là*. Obligations of secrecy very seldom shut out hostile observers, but they perfectly muzzle the best thinkers in the secret society. Except for a definite object within a brief period, a secret society is a blindfold and paralysed society. We were now to see something still more impracticable than permanent secret organisation in times of peace and when no revolution was going forward, still more incoherent than a body of citizens of another country laying down the law and the conditions of policy to the mother country which they professed to follow. This curious exaggeration of the impracticable and the incoherent was to be a combination, a wondrous combination, of a secret society which published its most special objects, with a constitutional and parliamentary party which was to proclaim its perfect disregard of laws, Constitution, and Parliament. As a most charming and accomplished manager of half a dozen European revolutions said to me, from one of those famous armchairs looking over the courtyard of the Grand Hôtel: 'Tiens, tiens, c'est l'accouplement d'un lapin fou avec un poisson d'avril.' Irish revolution has usually commanded

the irrepressible smiles of the masters of the science upon the Continent. This latest variation was very nearly quite as extraordinary as any of the heraldic monsters which the ingenuity of colleges of arms has put together out of odd joints and members of all the zoological animals. The 'New Departure' was being hatched.

The Clann-na-Gael, no matter what the fine frenzy of the London press may impute, is no collection of vulgar hooligans, but an organisation of vast capability. It has had its black sheep; and in secret societies this species of cattle is apt to be phenomenally dark-coloured. Apart from the immense multitude of its rank-and-file, it has included many hundreds of the foremost Irishmen of the United States in all the professions, commercial, medical, legal, judicial, and military. Mr. Parnell's Parliamentary party, whatever its statesmanship and independence, has presented arrangements of sharp Irish wits to the alternate or simultaneous discomposure of both the front benches. Yet the elegant extract of these political entities which was now in preparation promised to include most of the defects inherent in each. When the attraction of dollars was added to the native beauty of the 'New Departure,' the result was a portent which, unfortunately for Ireland, was also a power.

But let us cast a more careful glance at an occurrence of a previous year which foretokened some of the mental qualities at least of the coming manifestation. The year 1876 was the centennial of the American Revolution. A number of Dublin Nationalists at Harold's Cross thought that they ought to congratulate President and General Grant upon the circumstance. How the gentlemen in Dublin expected to contribute either to the happiness or the self-importance of the average American citizen by the proceeding, deponent knoweth not. But they passed their address of congratulation, and they deputed Mr. Charles Stewart Parnell, M.P., and Mr. O'Connor Power, M.P., as a delegation to present the address to the Government at Washington. On their arrival President Grant, in a strictly unofficial reception,

thanked them personally for their kind remembrance of the American Revolution, but opined that communications from members of foreign nations to the United States Government had to go through some routine of an official character. He hoped the congratulatory Irishmen would visit Washington anyhow. When the delegates of the meeting at Harold's Cross, Dublin, came to Washington, they were officially informed that official presentations and receptions could only occur through the ambassador of the State which was the habitat of the presentationers, if I may coin a word up to the level of the situation. 'Tare-and-ages, the British Ambassador !' Now Dublin patriots have no objection to various things British or even Scotch. Indeed, it is difficult to perceive why a British ambassador in his lawful functions should be less endurable than the British tax-collector. Why Messrs. Parnell and Power, who had both sworn allegiance to the Queen, should jib at her ambassador, and that, too, in a merely official matter, it would take the acumen of Harold's Cross to perceive. For myself, as I am a convinced adherent of the native Irish Parliament of King, Lords, and Commons ; and as the sovereign, who is incorrectly styled 'King of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland,' is rightfully entitled to the style of 'King of the United Kingdoms' in question—please, let the compositor note the plural—and as, furthermore, 'the King can do no wrong,' though the two front benches be an amalgam of all the iniquities ; then it follows that I can have no difficulty about the matter, but am far more ready to recognise an ambassador than a tax-collector. Just imagine an Irish man or woman in a foreign country, who has been shamefully ill-used by a wretched foreign police, not being allowed to invoke the protection of his or her ambassador, whom he or she is assisting to feed and clothe out of his or her modest resources ! Yet Mr. Parnell insisted upon boggling at the ambassador ; came home without officially informing the American Government that Harold's Cross was quite glad at its continued existence—notwithstanding which the continued

existence continued unabbreviated ; and was considered, in consequence, at Harold's Cross, by all the people about to make the 'New Departure,' a tremendous patriot, or words to that effect. It is said that only witty persons say really foolish things, and perhaps that is why a witty nation does such egregious ones.

What was the New Departure? Well, it was first a demand to give up Home Rule ; secondly, it was a demand to substitute an agitation for peasant proprietary, which meant making the British Treasury practically landlord of Ireland for the half-century or century required for all Irishmen to repay the purchase money ; thirdly, it was a demand for the Irish party on all subjects to be governed by the majority vote, which meant that the Boss with the pay-chest was to muzzle or expel the conscience and brains of the party. There were a couple of other suggestions of no importance in the circumstances. Separation instead of federalism. Agrarianism and the war of classes instead of national unity. Tammany instead of freedom. Such was the pith of a programme which was announced towards the end of 1878 as the joint work of Mr. John Devoy and Mr. Michael Davitt. Mr. Devoy had been a soldier in the Foreign Legion of France ; a soldier in a British regiment, which he joined for the purpose of Fenianising the Irish soldiery ; had been an able and daring adviser in military questions of the Fenian Centres, but had not been followed ; had been convicted, and amnestied after five years ; and had renewed his connexion with conspiracy in America. I have always heard the highest praise of his pecuniary disinterestedness. Such were his qualifications for joining Mr. Michael Davitt in substituting agrarianism and its consequences for the policy of Mr. Butt. Mr. Davitt will come under consideration in 1879, the year when the Land League was started by Ford's Skirmishing Fund. In 1878 it was only casting its shadow before.

CHAPTER XI

THE SESSION OF 1878: MR. BUTT'S BREAKING HEALTH AND HEART—PARNELL CONTINUES DISSENSION—THE TORIES AND THE CLERGY

The Session of 1878—The Situation at Westminster—Mr. Parnell's Renewed Attacks upon the Home Rule Leader—Mr. Butt's Breaking Health and Heart—Russian Policy in the East and the Parnellites—Progress of anti-Home Rule Agitation in Ireland—The Tory Government and the Catholic Clergy—The Education Control Concession—The Ruin of Education—Two Calamitous Acts—The Intermediate Education Act of 1878 and the Queen's-University-Abolition and Examining-Board-University Act of 1879—'An Education to produce Failures.'

WE have now followed in the last chapter a synoptic narrative of the development of the anti-Home Rule movement on the side of Mr. Parnell and his allies, especially in connexion with American Fenianism; since the anti-ambassadorial crusade of Mr. Parnell and his colleague at Washington in 1876; through the joint conference of Fenians and Parliamentarians in the spring of 1878—at which Mr. Parnell did not certainly defend Home Rule; down to the publication of the Devoy-Davitt scheme of the New Departure towards the close of 1878, which was an open repudiation of Home Rule, a demand for agrarian war, and a demand for Irish Tammany rule in the Parliamentary party. The whole of the ground had been surveyed, and the whole of the positions had been marked out, on which the forces of the Land League were to march, and the banners of prairie value to wave, as soon as the Skirmishing Fund founded by Mr. Patrick Ford to burn English towns and cities had commenced to contribute the dollars which were the indispensable sinews of the subversive campaign. I did not miss a single move in the game. I fully understood the special nature of the hate which the

American Irish bore against England, as the author of the great famine which had cast them beggared, starving, and death-stricken on the American shores; and I also understood that the American Irish, having adopted permanently American allegiance and residence, being in fact quit of all connexion with England and all but sentimental connexion with Ireland, were utterly unfit advisers upon the relations of two countries, which must continue to live side by side, like Ireland and England. Passionate meetings and processions in a hundred American cities might shout 'To Sheol with the British Ambassador,' 'To Sheol with England and everything English,' and they could do this with equal sincerity and safety. They, and their sons, and the great-grandsons of their sons, would never dwell within a hundred miles of England, would never have to handle produce on an Irish quay, or turn a sod of soil in an Irish field. As exiles from Ireland, as descendants of Irish, this large and gifted class of American citizens might be expected, like Philhellenic Greeks throughout the world, to love the mother country and to hate her enemies. But to presume to dictate to the motherland what should or should not be the policy of Ireland in Irish affairs, was a piece of strange unfilialness on the part of those numerous and valuable American citizens. Ireland had during a period approaching ten years already approved by every organ and manifestation of her public life the Home Rule scheme of arrangement, involving reconciliation, with Great Britain and with the Empire. Now we had an open demand from Transatlantic quarters for a total repudiation of Home Rule, for a total repudiation of the hope of arrangement and reconciliation with England, for a total repudiation of the hope of arrangement and reconciliation with the Protestants of Ireland, with the descendants of the men who had raised the mighty Custom House on Liffey bank and the exquisite loveliness and pride of the Parliament House in College Green. And Mr. Parnell—half American, it is true—was to be the figure-head of this extern incursion supported by the dollars of an infamous and anti-human fund!

Let me respectfully beg the British reader to note that in any censures of mine upon Irish folly or Irish crime, I imply, and mean to imply, no apology nor extenuation for British rule in Ireland. Historically and morally, on the contrary, it was British rule which had produced the excesses in America and the desperation in Ireland. And the Education Acts which were, during the present and succeeding years, to be placed upon the Statute Book were drafted for party political objects, still further to weaken the self-governing capacity of unfortunate Ireland.

Meantime, honourable men were growing more and more disgusted with the nagging warfare which was being kept up in the name, and with the sanction, of Mr. Parnell against the old lion of Home Rule, now rapidly weakening to his death. In the middle of August there appeared in the London press the account of a meeting of the executive of the Home Rule Confederation—of which Mr. Parnell had been made president, as mentioned during last session—according to which the executive had passed open and contemptuous censure upon the founder of Home Rule and the majority of the Home Rule party. The principal pretext was that Mr. Butt had not joined Mr. Gladstone in condemning the Conservative Government's opposition to the Russian advance in the Near East! It is curious to note that Parnell, in order to attack his venerable leader, joined forces with the distinguished British statesman who was to hunt Parnell himself to ruin and a tragic grave. I pass no censure on Mr. Gladstone—none whatever. As a British Liberal statesman he was only playing the game. I hardly censure Parnell as much as I might, though I have to condemn almost every step he was to take henceforward. If I accepted the stereotyped view of a born leader endowed with superhuman acumen and superhuman power of will, it would be otherwise. But I know, as I knew, that Parnell was always three-parts figure-head. There was a saying, universally attributed to Mr. T. M. Healy, concerning Parnell's precise function and importance at the very height of his legend. 'Parnell is just a spike—a damn spike—

which we have got to hammer into the British Government.' Parnell was a good deal more than that. But there was this which was perfectly true. Parnell had surrounded himself with a group of singularly able men in their way, quick, fluent, almost eloquent, some with some capacity for affairs, daring in the war of words, boasters, promisers, popular darlings in their way; but the whole of them, whether singly or together, were absolutely wanting in prestige or the appearance or potentiality of command. Look at them after Parnell was deserted by them, and had gone under with exhausted frame and ulcerated heart. Was there ever the remotest possibility of leadership among them, all or any? The cold, handsome aristocrat—a bit hero, a bit Catiline, a bit fortune's favourite—gave them the style, the *cachet*, the swagger, and the tone, which was absent from each of them and from all of them together. So they wisely pooled all their very considerable abilities for the moderately elevated work in which they were enlisted; and they called the result or addition, Parnell! During the years in which he was ten times as much at Captain O'Shea's dwelling as he was at the House or at any quarters of the Parnell party, they all vowed, all the same, that he was fighting for Ireland all the time. They were Parnell's men, *and they were Parnell*, the ubiquitous, untiring, inexhaustible, ever-ready, non-existent Parnell. I often chaffed him on it. 'Lucky man, Parnell, the more you are away, the more you are here all the same.' 'I am always here, when I am wanted,' he would say; but he knew right well that he might be anywhere else, and the faithful *United Ireland*, and the faithful Irish News Agency, and the faithful Mr. T. M. Healy, and the faithful Mr. T. P. O'Connor, and the faithful Mr. W. O'Brien would not cease to ascribe to the indefatigable chief the grandeur of the fight and the glory of the victory. And then, and then, the whole show caved in! I remember that in the session of 1885, at the height of Parnell's career, there had been 400 divisions, at only 50 of which Mr. Parnell had been present.

Did the large share which makebelieve had in Parnell's

leadership excuse his fresh attacks upon Mr. Butt in the summer of 1878? It is hard to say. He had become involved to an increasing extent, ever since his abortive Washington tour, with men who knew nothing, and cared less, about the unity of the Irish party, the promotion of Home Rule, and the conciliation of the Irish Conservative classes. The vote of censure on Mr. Butt passed by a majority of the executive of the Confederation in spite of my earnest protest—when resigning the hon. secretaryship I had remained vice-president—was openly declared to have been directed by Mr. Parnell and Mr. Biggar. Mr. Biggar in 1878 still believed whole-heartedly in Parnell. I tried to get from them a repudiation of the published statement that they were the instigators of the affront. In a letter to the *Freeman's Journal*, dated August 24, 1878, I made this appeal to their better feelings and to their obligations to the old leader:—

I confess for my part that any such approval of a censure upon Mr. Butt by my valued colleagues of Cavan and Meath appears to me utterly incredible. . . . The resolutions passed are seriously garbled in all the reports. . . . No reason could be given for the vote against Mr Butt. . . . The members of the executive stuck to their censure and quoted Mr. Parnell. . . . I repeat my protest against these proceedings.

Unfortunately, it was only too true. This piece of treacherous discourtesy had been authorised and ordered by Parnell. It was not only mutinous and treacherous, but cruel. Butt was dying. At this time we have Mr. Butt writing to his friend and physician, Dr. O'Leary, M.P., telling of the 'uneasy situation at his heart,' of 'the difficulty of breathing,' of the 'pantings,' of 'the vagueness in my trains of thought.' The Home Rule party had given their venerable leader formal permission to absent himself from their meetings, at his convenience. Before a twelvemonth was past Isaac Butt was sleeping the last sleep in a graveyard of Donegal, in the old principality of the O'Donnells, whose blood ran in his own veins. It will be admitted that the young man from Avondale and Cambridge was hardly

behaving as an Irish gentleman any more than as an Irish patriot in covering with sorrow the white, drooping head. Even Mr. Barry O'Brien, the rapturous eulogist of everything he fancied that he knew about Parnell, cannot refrain from admitting the personal distress to Mr. Butt, the deadly hurt to the Home Rule cause, which lay in the conduct of Parnell and his abettors or instigators.

Butt (he writes) was now breaking fast. One remembers how in the session of 1878 he moved about the House careworn and dejected. He felt that the ground was slipping under his feet. He knew the time was gone when he could hope to lead a united Irish party to victory. The dissensions among the Parliamentarians were fatal to his command, if they were not in truth fatal to the triumph of the Home Rule cause itself. All these things he saw clearly, and he was bowed down with sorrow and despair.

There is the summary of Parnell's action after four years in that party to which he had been welcomed and helped by the generous aid of Isaac Butt. He had brought his dying chief to 'sorrow and despair.' The dissensions that he and his created were 'fatal to the triumph of the Home Rule cause.' And be it not forgotten! Every detail of the active policy, as I created it, as I developed it, as I tried to teach it to the illiterate intelligence of Parnell, could be executed, could be adapted, could be extended, without shock or offence to the Moderate Nationalists, and without discovery by English parties in the House of Commons. Even I, who had knowledge or coadjutors for interminable interventions of the gravest kind, was often obliged to be a mere obstructionist, because upon almost every subject under heaven Parnell's mind was such an untaught and unteachable vacuum that he could do nothing under heaven but obstruct. To the statesmanlike reader will be revealed in the course of this narrative a couple of examples of what I intended and did by the active policy.

One of the indications of the new and baser spirit which was being sown and fostered in Ireland was afforded by the violent hostility exhibited against the members of the Home

Rule party who had voted in condemnation and distrust of Russia's action in the Near East. Because the Disraeli Government was a British Government and had expressed distrust of Russia, therefore any Irish member who expressed distrust of Russia had betrayed Ireland. 'To be always against the Government, right or wrong': that was the fool's book of wisdom which no man should doubt or suffer to be doubted. Mr. Butt, who knew his Russia, had ignored the fool's book of wisdom: so had I, and it was my professional business as a leader writer on foreign affairs to study my Russia. We became thereby to certain Parnellites 'traitors to Ireland,' and I never discovered that Parnell defended either his chief or his comrade. At Dublin I was interrupted by a cry: 'Why did you vote with the Government?' At Belfast a score of patriots assailed both Biggar and myself on the same accusation. If the British Government became Catholics, all true Irishmen were to go over to Luther and Calvin! That is the degree of moral and intellectual capacity which was being encouraged.

It happened that this session there was distributed among members of Parliament a White-book on a subject which had, for a long time before, filled with painful and terrible details the entire Catholic press of Europe. It was a collection of official accounts from British consular agents at Warsaw, Odessa, and elsewhere on the savage persecution by the Russian Government of a Catholic population of Slavonic rite, the so-called Uniates of Poland, in order to force them to join the Russian Church. Confiscation, exile, the whip, the bullet were the persuasions favoured by the Government at St. Petersburg. The effect produced upon public opinion by these disclosures was profound. This was the freedom-loving Russia which was trying to annex Turkey entirely out of horror at intolerance and persecution! A couple of extracts will suffice. Mr. Vice-Consul Wilson reported from Odessa, as regards one district:—

There now remain some 60,000 Uniats. As they will not change their religion, the Government persecutes them by

putting them in prison, by flogging them, and by billeting Cossack troops, who commit every outrage in their villages.

Lieutenant-Colonel Mansfield reported from Warsaw :—

In the district of Minciéwics the peasants refused to accept the Russian priest. They with their wives and children were captured and given the option of accepting the priest ; on their refusal, fifty lashes with the Cossack whip were given to every man, twenty-five to every woman, and ten to every child without distinction of age or sex ; one woman received as much as one hundred lashes.

Because some of us resented these examples of Russian love of liberty by voting in the same lobby with the Government, we were denounced by the Parnellites as bad Irishmen. The Land League was casting its shadow before. The Mr. Matthew Harris who told me that Ireland wanted ‘ a leader who was a Protestant and a landlord ’ wrote a hot-and-hot letter denouncing me as a ‘ Beaconsfieldian ’ and an ‘ Imperialist.’ Instead of the open meetings, the free opinions, the invitations to men of opposite views, which marked Butt’s Home Rule, we had a stupid and brutal inquisition.

If you must ignore even such blameless dignitaries as ambassadors because they represent the common Crown of Britain and Ireland, if you are forbidden to vote in the Government lobby even when the question is far higher and wider than any Government, it seems clear that there was no further room on the Parnellite platform for any kind of liberty of opinion.

This session I introduced to Irish politics two of the most esteemed recruits of the Home Rule party : Mr. Lysaght Finnegan and Mr. Justin McCarthy. Lysaght Finnegan was one of the most dashing types of the journalist knight-errant whom anybody ever encountered. He came to me with introductions from Vienna, while I was hon. secretary of the Confederation, and he asked and obtained, more for honour than profit, an assistant-secretaryship and post of travelling organiser. He had just come from the Near East, where he had been partly war correspondent

and partly or principally war volunteer in a mixed commando of friends of Roumanian and Servian nationalism from several European countries. He brought back, what he assured me was common to all the volunteers who visited the new Christian States at that crisis, a fanatic devotion to the fair Queen of Roumania—the Sylva Carmen of literature, the soldiers' sister-of-mercy, and the patroness of chivalry. Whenever Lysaght Finnegan was inspiring himself for daring deeds, he was wont to pour forth in a rich martial voice the verses of a Roumanian war-song about the Queen, ending in the refrain of her beloved name, 'Elisabeth ! Elisabeth !' He had previously been a comrade with our Captain Kirwan during the Franco-German War in a so-called Irish Legion of a couple of companies formed to aid the French against the Prussian invaders. He became Parnell's candidate for the seat at Ennis in 1879 and won it handsomely. It is needless to introduce Mr. Justin McCarthy, whose graceful novels charmed an artistic circle, and whose smooth and optimist popularisations of English history have sensibly added to our stock of uncontroversial narrative. By arrangement, I brought Parnell to make his acquaintance in his house in Gower Street early this year. Mr. Parnell liked him very much, and both of us asked my friend Mr. Shaw, the future successor of Mr. Butt, to find him a seat in Parliament. On a vacancy in County Longford occurring, Mr. Shaw and Mr. Parnell joined forces to secure his election the following year. Mr. McCarthy was married to a charming and accomplished lady, cousin of Mr. Shaw. I had hoped that the tie would make for party unity, but the early death of Mrs. McCarthy destroyed this calculation. Mr. McCarthy joined Parnell in attacking Shaw, and afterwards followed Mr. Gladstone in attacking Parnell. It will be remembered that Parnell, when he heard that the deserters had made Mr. McCarthy their leader, amused the public a good deal by declaring that he was 'a very nice old gentleman for a small tea-party.' A similar image had long before occurred to the literary Lord Mayor of London, Sir Robert Fowler,

who, fascinated by his blameless bearing and repute, dubbed him 'Amúmon Makarites,' by a Homeric derangement of epithets meaning the blameless and blissful one. The dominating influence of his political creed was Gladstonian Liberalism, and by an honourable consistency the core of his likings and the country of his intelligence continued to be that circle of ground which has the *Daily News* for centre and Bouverie Street as diameter. He contested with Mr. Sexton, I believe, the proud distinction of 'holding the Government in the hollow of his hand'—a boast really rather frequent in Parnellism—and has received a Crown pension for his 'blameless and blissful' productions of an historical description.

At the end of the year 1878 it became known that Mr. John Devoy, the New Departure Fenian and co-operator with Mr. Michael Davitt, had sailed from New York to Ireland in pursuance of the design to revolutionise the Irish situation by a programme of extreme agrarianism. As the activities of Devoy, Davitt, Parnell, Egan, and Ford in setting up the Land League against the Home Rule party really centre and culminate in the following twelve-month, I shall not commence until the following chapter an account of the invasion of Irish parliamentarianism by this Catilinarian combination. Mr. John Devoy, it is to be observed, never obtained the approval of most influential and consistent members of the Clann-na-Gael and Irish Republican Brotherhood. Extremists like Mr. John O'Leary understood by insurrection nothing but insurrection—that is, a military rising when the circumstances should be favourable. The welter of intimidation and outrage never struck them as an effective and honourable equivalent for the work of officers and soldiers; and in a real conflict between New Departure representatives and the authority of Mr. Speaker, they expected it was not Mr. Speaker who would find himself suspended or expelled. Between all the evil influences which were concentrating upon Ireland—the mutiny against Butt driving him to resignation, the failing life of the old chief, the coming and consultations of the

Jacobin leaders of all hues and origins—it was increasingly evident that riot and miscellaneous rascality were much closer at hand than the inauguration of an Irish Parliament.

What usually takes place in Ireland when the defence of public interest becomes slack or deteriorated was taking place now. The British Government began to multiply opportunities for gratitude on the part of the clerical power. The Intermediate Education (Ireland) Bill was brought into the Lords towards the end of June, and proved to be so entirely unconnected with education except to enfeeble and lower it, that it was rushed enthusiastically through the Upper House in a few days, and could have been presented for corresponding treatment in the Commons within a week. The new Chief Secretary, Mr. James Lowther, was seldom, however, in a hurry, and the Bill was introduced in the Commons a few days after the opening of July. It was a Bill for totally destroying all secondary schools devoting themselves to the beneficial training of their pupils, and for richly endowing all the establishments which were prepared to make money out of the brains of their poor lads without regard to any consideration but the pecuniary profit of the proprietors. One of the most cultured and candid of the Irish Catholic bishops, Most Reverend Dr. O'Dwyer of Limerick, stated to the University Commission of 1903 that the only result of the activity of the intermediate institutions under the Act of 1878 was to produce 'total failures,' youths who were 'unfit for anything' under heaven. For quarter of a century, when the bishop gave his evidence, the Intermediate Education (Ireland) Act of 1878 had been destroying the intellectual chances and the future careers of the entire secondary school pupils of the country. The means adopted by Parliament in 1878 were simple, straightforward, and immediately calculated to produce effect. Under the circumstances, indeed, it would have required a miracle to prevent them from raising the crop of total failures and good-for-nothings described by the prelate. This miracle was not forthcoming.

The reader will admire the straightforward simplicity

of the measure. There were but two essentials: (1) Finance, and (2) its application. In spite of the existing law, £1,000,000 were taken from the so-called Irish Church surplus, being the product of such endowments of the Irish Protestant Church as were confiscated by the Union Parliament in 1866; and these £1,000,000 were employed in the following manner by a body of commissioners to be appointed by the Government. All schools, or purporting to be such, in Ireland, having male or female pupils between the ages when primary education is supposed to have terminated and when the higher education ought to begin, were to be empowered to enter their pupils for competitive examination in the subjects of examination to be set for their study. Prizes for success were to be given to the successful pupils, and what were called result fees were to be given to the schools producing the successful pupils, in proportion to the number of successes. When the names of the commissioners were divulged by the Right Hon. James Lowther, who presided over the debates as knowingly serene as if the House were the Jockey Club, it was found that they were nominated by the religious bodies in Ireland, with the exception of two or three, who, like flies in amber, presented the incongruity of being understood to represent education. They may have been representative, but they were an unimportant minority. The evident object was to authorise and encourage the various bodies owning the schools to employ their pupils as so many milch cows for the benefit of the owners, dividing up their studies, and selecting their studies, and directing their studies not with any view to the future education or career of the pupils, but so as to obtain the largest total of money prizes and result fees for the school owners. This evident object, as the Bishop of Limerick has mentioned, was of course obtained. Also there was no check, destination, or control imposed upon the use of the money gained for the school owners. 'If I make £500 out of my school,' had added the Bishop of Limerick, 'I can do what I like with it; I can spend it on building a missionary chapel in

China.' It is not necessary to spend a farthing on school accommodation, or salaries to outside tutors, or a fund for giving the young money-getters a start in life. The Union Parliament, like Gallio, cared not for those things.

That is now thirty-two years ago, and ever since, during those years, during that generation and a half, all the young minds of Ireland of the secondary school class, between the ages of ten and sixteen, have been turned into piecework money-makers for the school owners. It is not the continuation of the primary curriculum, it is not the preparation for the university or the technical college. It is just winning at every periodical examination for five or six years the sums affixed to Subject A and Subject X and Subject M and Subject H and Subject E, and every other subject from botany to archæology, or French extracts, or a little Irish, or English history, or arithmetic or zoology, nicely selected and nicely jumbled and nicely variegated, just as the experienced crammer judges that the little patients will be able to stuff their memories best for the prizes, and the result fees, and the rest of the pecuniary profit of the school owners. When at the end of the five or six years the young Irish boy has no more examinations to pass, and has taken all the subjects which he could cram best, in doubles, or triplets, or by the half-dozen ; when his young head has been crammed and recrammed, and he has followed no well-thought system of education, and he has prepared for no university course, and no technical college, but has simply used his brains, cram, cram, as was most profitable, not to himself, but to the school owners ; when he has been squeezed of all he can or could gain, then the school door opens for his exit, and he goes into the world, unfit for the university, unfit for business, with a smattering of twenty things, and no education ; while his parents proudly recount all his examinations, and wonder that he remains just the helpless, loafing ' failure ' described even by a bishop of the corporation which owns the schools. Mr. Birrell, a short time ago, denounced the horrible schools of the Intermediate Education (Ireland) Act as ' money-

making machines' that destroy young lives, and then went and placed a 'National University' at the disposal of the school owners! That was the fine work that was founded in the year 1878, as a boon and a blessing to Ireland, as a bargain between Church and Crown. Both front benches blessed it. The Irish members, such as understood it, were helpless in the paralysis caused by mutiny and revolt. The *Times* wrote very superior articles pointing out how conscientiously England was trying to please the Irish. I asked Parnell what he thought of it. 'Well,' he said meditatively, 'there does not appear to be much clericalism in it. It seems to steer clear of that. Looks open to everybody equally.' Wiser men than he thought the same.

Since England made the surrender of their farms by the starving Irish in 1847—'all holdings over quarter of an acre'—the inexorable condition for getting famine relief, there has been nothing so ruinous to Ireland as the Intermediate Education (Ireland) Act of 1878. Coupled with the horrible primary system—'the worst in Europe'—and the deliberately disorganised, discouraged, and demoralised university system, it completed the worst combination for degrading the intelligence of a great race, whose intellect was their best asset, that could be planned by slave-holders desirous of keeping enlightenment from their slaves. Of course, there should be a primary system, with full facilities for religion, but managed as regards secular matters by lay authority; and this primary system should lead to the doors of the secondary schools. There should be secondary schools, with ample guarantees for religion, with due bifurcation of studies towards the university or the technical college, which should conduct the national youth to the highest stage. The university, national also, should be like those universities of Germany and Austria, which are learned, lay, and free; and which the Church cannot condemn, so long as the State cherishes the intellect of its citizens, and there are no 'eighty votes' in demand by Governments with votes as their highest aim.

The next year the Beaconsfield Government crowned the ruin of secondary education in Ireland by the ruin, the complete ruin, of university education and by the cowardly robbery of their hard-won honours and degrees from the graduates of the Queen's University. As the two measures form one whole, the result of which, besides the injury to the education of youth, was practically to close the teaching profession in Ireland against the educated Catholic laity, I anticipate the year 1879 and finish the mention of the matter in the present session. Mr. O'Connor Don, M.P. for Roscommon, one of the most cultivated and respected of the landowners in the party, had, during 1878, as in 1877, endeavoured to obtain the passage of a Bill for establishing what would be practically a Catholic university in Ireland under the devout title of St. Patrick's University. It would have created a genuine university, with teaching colleges, with some guarantees for the absence of sectarianism, while facilitating the greater recognition of Catholic requirements; and it would have created a great body of scholarships and other aids to deserving students by an endowment of £1,500,000 from the Irish Church surplus. It appeared to me at the time that there could have been applied to it the safeguard of Catholic consciences which I had proposed myself in reference to the Queen's Colleges ten years before. This was that any professor, who should have been declared *by a unanimous vote* of the Irish Catholic Episcopate to be hostile or dangerous in his teaching to the religion of Catholic students, should be required to quit his professorship. I held that it must, indeed, be an indubitable case of misconduct which would unite a unanimous vote, and that a unanimous vote deserved to be treated as a decisive objection. Much, however, in the member for Roscommon's Bill would depend upon the composition of the senate, and it was certainly probable that ecclesiastical representation would be greater rather than less. Still the Bill was a sound University Bill, and did not propose to do injustice to any existing university. Suddenly the Beaconsfield

Cabinet announced that it could give no support to it, as they meant to introduce a Government Bill on the subject. On the last day of June, accordingly, Lord Cairns introduced a Bill in the Lords for abolishing the Queen's University and establishing a mere examining university like the original edition of the University of London. The pretext was the alleged impossibility of Catholics attending an undenominational university. The pretext was notoriously false. We have only to consult the leading English Catholics on that matter. The Duke of Norfolk will not be taken as the model of a bad Catholic. What was his action, and what was the action of five hundred leaders of English Catholic society, when Pope and Cardinal—Cardinal Manning at the height of his influence—founded a Catholic university in London, placed Monsignor Capel at its head, and called upon the Catholics of England to send their sons to it? 'Most Holy Father, decidedly no!' The English Catholics absolutely refused to attend the Pope's Catholic university in England. They maintained their right to attend 'the national universities' of Britain, and they got the Catholic university abolished, and free access to 'the national universities' guaranteed by papal and episcopal decree. The Jesuits and the Benedictines at once set about opening Catholic halls of residence at Oxford and Cambridge, just as they could do in Queen's College, Cork or Galway; and leading Jesuits openly write that mingling with their Protestant fellow-countrymen is most beneficial in every way to the Catholic students of Oxford and Cambridge. It is the same story in Bavaria, in Austria, in Hungary, even in Spain. No Catholic State in the world supports a Catholic university. The ecclesiastical students for the Catholic priesthood go in thousands yearly to the undenominational universities of Austria and Germany. Irish Catholicism is exactly the same as Bavarian or English Catholicism. The mingling of fellow-countrymen of different religions is more necessary in Ireland than anywhere in the world. That is why the 'Union Policy' is to keep them separated, even in the university; and the

pretence is put forward that mingling with fellow-countrymen is contrary to the religion of Catholics! Was ever such malice combined with such hypocrisy?

On July 15, 1879, the House of Lords, under the Conservative impulsion of Lord Cairns, had already galloped through the *Teaching University (Ireland) Destruction and Sectarianisation Bill*. Within ten days Mr. James Lowther was moving its second reading in the House of Commons. On the same day a deputation of graduates of the Queen's University, protesting against the destruction of their university and the transformation of their title and degrees, was received by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whose exquisite deportment we have already admired when Sir Michael Hicks-Beach was qualifying for higher promotion in the limbo of the Chief Secretaryship. The Chancellor had no satisfaction to offer to the graduates. He was 'informed' that their fears were quite groundless. Her Majesty's Government were certainly not going to establish a Catholic university, but only to meet the wants of her Majesty's Irish subjects. Could not any wants, real or imaginary, be met without breaking up our university, taking from us the name which we had earned in the learned world, and forcing on us the unknown appellation of a new-made institution which would not even be a teaching university? Was the British statesman entirely ignorant that a clear half of the new university was to be handed over to the rector of the Jesuits, with authority to nominate all fellowships, examinerships, &c., from among the employees of a Jesuit college in Dublin? Thenceforward all nomination to the highest positions in at least half the senate and examining body of the 'Royal University of Ireland,' as the thing was to be called, was to be exercised, not by the Irish Catholics, not even by Catholic members of the new university, but solely and exclusively by a clergyman belonging to one religious community, officially forbidden to exist in Ireland, bound by a code of its own which makes every Jesuit without exception subject to the head of the community at Rome; who

may be a German, Dutch, or Belgian priest who has never even set foot in Ireland! I admire the Jesuit Society very much in its proper sphere and duty. But it is absolutely the fact that no Catholic nation in the entire world gives, or will ever give, its university education into the hands of any priest, however estimable, subject to the orders of any Jesuit General or Dominican General or other Order Superior, however estimable, or any body of clergymen, however estimable, whether belonging to a religious community or the ordinary hierarchy and priesthood of the Church. The English Catholics, with the Duke of Norfolk and all, would not tolerate it. They had refused to tolerate the papal university in London. But the Chancellor of the Exchequer assured the deputation of Queen's University graduates that their fears were quite groundless, 'that there was not going to be a Catholic university in Ireland!' What significance has the vocabulary of the English language according to the usage of British Cabinet Ministers in the exercise of their official functions?

The cowardliest and most abominable part of the whole proceeding was the abolition of our university and the titles and degrees which we had earned under the charter of the Crown, and which we had raised to a rank of respect and honour in the university world. The Queen's University and Queen's Colleges were miserably poor. They were fettered and impeded at every turn by political dictation penetrating the whole of our collegiate administration. We had no fellowships to encourage and reward higher studies. We had only thirty miserable little entrance scholarships of £24 for the whole of the three colleges which were expected to supply university education to the whole of Ireland outside of Trinity College, Dublin. That was part of the game for pretending that the Queen's Colleges were 'a failure because they were contrary to the popular conscience.' As, besides having no secondary schools of value, the Irish were too poor to attend any university which was practically unendowed as regards

help to the students, the resulting thinness of attendance was declared to show that the Irish wanted a Catholic university ! In spite of every discouragement and privation, we had won a clean name for hard work and degrees of a high standard. The letters Q.U.I. were a guarantee of solid studies. Men from our colleges had gained distinction in every department. The bar, the bench, the medical profession, the civil service, knew and respected men who hailed from us. Raymond West, O'Kinealy, Finucane, Mr. Justice Munro, Lord Atkinson, Sir William McCormack, Judge Mulholland, Lord MacDonnell ; the Queen's University degree was borne proudly and was a cause of pride. Nobody had ever heard of the new ' Royal,' because it was not yet, among other reasons. Nobody might ever hear much good of it—this strange non-teaching demi-domain of an unknown conventual superior in Italy. Why strip us and our university of the title and the charter which had been honourably justified, which meant honour and livelihood to thousands of graduates ? Why not strip Balliol of its name and call it the Bull and Goat ? Why not dub Magdalen, Dorothy or Emma ? We were being robbed of our degrees and name in the world of learning, simply because we were Irish in the presence of a Union Government and Parliament, and our robbery and slight were expected to procure some electoral advantages for personages who would not offend even in thought the rank and name of a British place of higher education. A pickpocket on Ludgate Hill could not be more free with *meum* and *tuum* than those distinguished politicians who told political taradiddles to Queen's University deputations.

To the credit of the *Times*, it jibbed at the crudeness of this educational legislation. As for the Irish Home Rule party, which was already led on many occasions by Mr. Shaw, in view of the increasing inability of Mr. Butt's health to bear the fatigues of leadership, there was profound dislike both of the Bill as it stood, merely killing the Queen's University and substituting an examining board, and of what was suspected to lie behind the Bill in the future.

Even the Irish hierarchy by no means understood that the Jesuits were intended to oust them from their control of the Catholic University College founded by Dr. Newman and arranged in defiance of most of his best ideals. The dislike to the removal of all obligation to follow a collegiate course before proceeding to a 'university degree' was widespread among the Irish members. 'Let us have a teaching university, not a mere examining board,' was a general sentiment. Mr. Butt was profoundly angered at it all. 'To think that a Conservative Government could do such a miserable thing,' he said frequently, for there was more than a shade of Toryism still in the Home Rule chief. 'Every hedge-school will be a crammer's academy for university degrees.' It was resolved to move an amendment to the second reading which would show, at any rate, that the Irish representatives meant murder to the unsightly intruder. Mr. Shaw moved 'That no measure of university education could be considered satisfactory to the people of Ireland which did not provide increased facilities for collegiate instruction.' The whole strength of the Irish representation divided against the Bill, but we were supported by very few Englishmen. Even in an educational matter, some jobbing policy of vote-catching by the Union Government was to be carried through against the protest of Ireland. We were ninety-two votes. The destruction of the teaching university, the creation of a mere examining board, 'for hedge-school graduation,' was forced upon indignant Ireland by a British Unionist majority of 259. The London legislature stamped upon Irish education almost as enthusiastically as upon Irish self-government. It was another triumph to add to the long succession of similar victories of British opinion which had followed with little interruption since the suppression of the Irish Parliament three-quarters of a century before.

Within a year, within a very few months—the Land League had already been founded—all England would be talking, writing, discussing, denouncing; and the one

theme would be the domination of the Irish situation by every influence except calm reason and educated judgment. I suppose not one in a hundred thousand ever connected the presence of ignorance with the absence of instruction, or asked himself the question, how either educated leaders or educated followers could come into existence in a country in which the primary schools were a disgrace, the secondary schools a machinery for private lucre, and the university a sorry victim torn between incompetent bigots and scheming politicians. The British Treasury could only spare thirty miserable scholarships annually to help the young men of a population of 5,000,000—it had been 8,000,000 when the miserable endowment was founded—to enter the Queen's Colleges. How many millions of money would it cost to the British Treasury, and far more to society at large, before there would be even a temporary stay to the ignorant and unreasoning rush of sheer folly and animal passion which was in preparation? The University Education Bill was passed over our heads, and became British law for Ireland in a month. It crowned appropriately the Intermediate Education Act of the preceding year. The absolute ruin of Irish scholarship and of the beginnings of scholarship was now as certain as parliamentary ingenuity or absurdity could make it. Let me explain with some detail what had been done. The English reader may be specially assured that the whole of the near future of Ireland was to be disastrously affected by the ill deeds of that legislation.

Mr. Butt's angry prophecy that 'every hedge-school would become a crammer's academy' to prepare new 'graduates' fell short of accuracy so far as many of the ancient hedge-schools presented higher characteristics, from the point of view of good citizenship, than much that would now be current, protected, and rewarded. The higher class of hedge-schools or classic-commercial schools, now swept away, were so called by analogy with the actual groups of hunted pupils and teachers 'behind the hedges' and in the crannies of the woods, who defied or evaded

the prohibition of 'Papist teachings' in the old times of politico-religious war and proscription. They always included rudimentary pupils along with bigger lads, and they gave a rough but fairly efficient commercial education to the general body, together with Greek, Latin, and some history to a select few. I remember well one of these schools at Galway which existed down to the year 1865 or so. There were two masters: the head master, Mr. Michael Winter, an A.B. of Trinity, and Mr. Thomas Ryan, the latter teaching the lower classes. There was no town in Ireland which had not one of these hedge-schools, as they were unjustly nicknamed. The Munster schools were said to be exceptionally good, and the fame of 'the Munster Latinists' extended over the middle of the century. Two causes killed them: first, the establishment of the Government national schools, which took away their primary pupils and a part of their income; and, secondly, the advent of a sort of secondary schools kept by the religious orders, including the Christian Brothers, and which, being advocated by the clergy, drew off the rest. The whole of these old schools were lay. To-day there is hardly a lay school in the country. Old Ireland was lay in school matters. The two late Education Acts of the British legislature destroyed the very hope of a re-opening of the teaching profession to laymen. The process was already far advanced. Religious orders, enabled to charge lower fees to parents, because partly supported by charitable contributions, had unfair advantages. The prizes and result fees of the Intermediate Education Act converted all these institutions into cramming classes, in which the pupils were kept working at piecework and patchwork according to the money to be made from the patches under the Act. By the recent 'Examining University' Act, all these conventual cramming factories of prize-winners were now enabled to promise that 'they would give a complete university education, including graduation in the new university, without the pupils having to go to any university.' It was a deadly blow to the attendance

of country students at the Queen's Colleges. It injured Trinity College very much also. It simply abolished schoolmastership and the professoriate as careers for lay Catholics.

If the reader will realise that the Jesuits, for instance, are regularly trained to cut out and exterminate the lay Catholic teacher, that they can at short notice found a secondary school—they always call it a college—anywhere, with a complete staff of Fathers ready to give instruction in ancient and modern classics, mathematics, natural history, English language and literature, &c., and that they can support such a college anywhere out of the immense central funds of the order, it can be seen that an Irish Catholic scholar has as much chance of making a livelihood as tutor or professor as he would have by gold-mining in the Bog of Allen. In every country, in old France, in old Poland, and in all the modern countries where the Jesuits are not warned to confine themselves to religion, this sort of competition absolutely forbids the very existence of a class of learned Catholics living by their learning in a Catholic nation. The consequences are terrible very often for religion, as the absence of learned laymen terribly handicaps the Faith in general society. But the order pursues the good of the order and the fancied good of the Church. Add to the Jesuits the scores of other orders and communities which have arisen to thrive on the Intermediate Education and Examining University Acts: the Dominicans, the Vincentians, the Marists, the Salesians, the Oratorians, the Diocesan Colleges teaching lay as well as ecclesiastical students; and it is literally true that no lay Irishman can live decently by teaching within the coast-line of Ireland. The same tale is to be told of the female teachers. The net result is sheer intellectual destitution and bankruptcy for the country. Imagine Germany swept and stripped of its glorious professorial luminaries and distinctions. Imagine England occupied from end to end by clerical institutions and communities which leave not a single situation worth £150 a year to

any layman from one end of the kingdom to the other. Gone the professors and gone the cultured professorial homes, radiating into general society, and conveying an atmosphere of letters and science far and near. When the French Republic expelled, with great harshness, the teaching orders the other day, there was a public demand at once created for 250,000 lay teachers (men and women), as *instituteurs* and *institutrices*. In the female world alone, every corner of English civilisation is full of poor Irish governesses who are crowded out of every teaching-post in their native land, except the most menial, by the organised armies of teaching sisterhoods. Hundreds of young girls cannot get bread to eat, unless they take the veil and become, for bread's sake, teaching sisters. The Birrell University Act the other day has given the so-called National University absolutely into the hands of the Catholic Archbishop of Dublin and the Rector of the Jesuits. Their nominees alone are admissible. None else need apply. They may distribute some favours among lay dependants. The gates of the university, the college, the school remain locked and double-barred against the Irish Catholic layman and laywoman.

And you complain that Irish politics are ignorant and violent! If you deliberately, for occult but notorious political objects, kill the educated class *par excellence* in a nation, you *must* have ignorant and violent politics. Expel culture. Enter violence. It is the universal retribution.

Let there not be the slightest excuse for calling me hostile to religion. I am devoted to religion. I believe in the Holy Roman Catholic and Apostolic Religion beyond everything in the world; but I do not believe that when Christ said, 'Go ye and teach all nations,' He meant that His Apostles were to teach mathematics and languages, and polite literature, and monopolise and starve all the business of the schoolmaster and the professor. He meant the teaching of religion. 'But that is another story.' These remarks may be extended to apply to the increasing

monopoly of many industrial occupations by other classes of religious communities, living partly by alms and partly by cheap competition. The convent which is partly supported by the collecting plate can offer to do extremely cheap laundering and dressmaking and shirtmaking. And then the furious workwomen of Barcelona got forty convents set on fire !

CHAPTER XII

THE SESSION OF 1879: THE DEATH OF ISAAC BUTT—MR. SHAW, M.P., AS CHAIRMAN—THE SKIRMISHING FUND STARTS THE LAND LEAGUE—THE LAST ARMY FLOGGING ACT—THE FARMERS' ALLIANCE

The Session of 1879—Social Revolution and High Politics—The Widening of Divergences—The Death of Isaac Butt—Mr. Shaw as Leader—Mr. Parnell throws off the Mask—Increasing Incompetence of the Beaconsfield Government towards Ireland—The Skirmishing Fund founds the Land League—Mr. Davitt proclaims the Socialist State—Mr. Parnell follows and explains—Preparing the General Election in England—The Last Army Flogging Act—The Farmers' Alliance.

INTERPOLATED in the last chapter, which deals properly with the session of 1878, and in order to exhibit the continuous incompetence of the Westminster legislation on Irish education, it seemed expedient to describe the remarkable incident of the session of 1879 which added the 'Royal University of Ireland' to the long series of injurious failures devised for my country, and it will be unnecessary to return to it. This narrative, as I have already observed, is not a book of annals nor a chronicle of daily occurrences. It seeks to explain and recount the history of Irish parliamentarianism in the Empire, not merely in chronological sequence, though that is not omitted, but in its logical developments, as illustrating the tendencies, and the facts resulting from these tendencies, which have made and moulded recent and contemporary politics in connexion with Great Britain and Ireland. While, and perhaps because, almost the only contributions of the Beaconsfield Cabinet to the law-making for Ireland were precisely the fore-mentioned measures for further lowering the educational level of the Irish people, the confederacy of ideas and

methods between Mr. Parnell's immediate following and a materialist and socialist section of American Fenianism took an immense advance, and spread with the rapidity of an evil weed. When I say materialist and socialist, I mean also that this section which made war on the property of Ireland's alleged enemies, did so, not because they were men of property, but because these 'Ribbon Fenians' believed them to be Ireland's enemies. These Ribbon Fenians got this name from the fact that they were Fenians in their war against England as the oppressor of Ireland, and Ribbonmen in their war against the landlords as the evictors of the tenantry of Ireland. Several of these Ribbon Fenians in Dublin, I have been told, were connected by birth or family with Irish rural districts, such as Westmeath, in which the Ribbon Society had been planted for generations, and in which the Ribbon Lodges had carried their action to the extremest lengths of outrage and murder. It had been for generations in such districts, on the one side, the writ of ejectment and the crowbar brigade—the estate bailiffs equipped with the tools for demolishing the homes of the evicted—and the threatening letter and the hedge assassin on the other. Similar organisations have existed all over the world in every country in which race or circumstances have set the owners of land and the tillers of land at irreconcilable enmity. I presume the Saxon Ribbon Lodges must have been very active under the Norman conquerors when the latter found it necessary to proclaim that all bodies found murdered were to be assumed to be Normans unless proved to be Englishmen, and that in the absence of such proof the Saxon population of the district must pay the blood-fine for the murder of a Norman. Westmeath never beat that anyhow. Those early English Ribbonmen had adopted the grisly ingenuity of mutilating their killed Normans out of all recognition, as only the murders of Normans were punishable with blood-fine. There never was any doubt about the identity of a dead man under Irish Ribbon rule. These Ribbon Fenians were, are, and always will be, the most

ineradicable and immovable haters, not only of English authority, but of the social and political order in Ireland. They unite the relentless vengeance and thirst for vengeance of ruined peasants with the racial and national objects of the soldiers and statesmen of Irish Independence. Very probably they would form the gravest difficulty of the first independent Government of Ireland. The Land Leaguers were Ribbon Fenians to a man, always excepting such of their leaders as merely utilised their multitude and employed the force of their passions. The Ribbon Fenians in America and from America were, besides some adventurers, essentially the product of that legacy from the Black Famine which will impress its quenchless craving for revenge on the Irish-descended section of the American population for no ascertainable duration. When, in 1846 and 1848, Britannia—the eviction order in one hand and the bag of yellow meal in the other—stood before the starving Irish with that alternative: ‘Not a pinch of the poorest relief shall pass one perishing mouth until the final surrender of every rood of ground beyond one-quarter acre’; on that day Britain staked, and may have lost, the greatest chance which ever lay before a modern empire. I wish to repeat, what I have often intimated, that all this unforgiving hate of England, whatever may be its historical antecedents, has the remotest possible connexion with the welfare of Ireland, or even, very often, with much desire for the welfare of Ireland. I have heard one of these fanatics of vengeance say, ‘If I could see Ireland dragging England down to hell, I would be happy, though Ireland never rose again’; and many similar ravings have struck me both at the period in question and since. It was not the Land League which originated these sentiments. Too often it adopted them. It is precisely the identical talk of those desperadoes and janissaries of the Communist or Nihilist cause, who are so vowed and sworn to destruction that they detest reform far more than tyranny.

During the spring of 1879 the air of the Irish parliamentary quarter was full of statements and rumours of

coming catastrophe. Parnell was enigmatical. I am certain he was puzzled. He knew he was playing with fire, and he feared to be scorched, while he had no keen wish to scorch anybody. He certainly did not believe then, or ever, in the Irish universal revolution. If the revolution would only revolute just enough to make the Squire of Avondale the most illustrious scion of his illustrious line, it might be a very good thing. He had not a pinch of love for Devoy or Davitt—especially for Davitt. Devoy would go back to America, but Davitt might want the presidency of anything like an Irish Republic which might turn up. Parnell wanted no rivals in the admiration of Ireland or the attention of England. He was painfully poor. Even my periodical cheques paying back my loan were always most welcome. He envied my handsome income from the press. ‘I wish I could make £1000 a year as easily as you,’ he said with a smile; and he meant it. ‘I believe the *Times* would take you on with delight,’ I replied. ‘Perhaps for a few special articles,’ he laughed back. I had known Parnell intimately since 1875. For years the goings and comings between 16 Keppel Street, Bloomsbury and 8 Serjeants’ Inn, Temple, had been daily and almost hourly. I had been in Parliament before him. Thanks to the election judge, I had been a ‘martyr’—that valuable Irish asset—long before him. I wrote on high politics for the best papers when he was a silent member and a gentleman without his Cambridge degree. I may suppose that is why I was never capable of touching a cent of the League money. It has always amused me vastly to read in the memoirs and romances of the Parnellite Diadochoi the constant reference to the ‘lofty reserve,’ the ‘proud aloofness,’ the ‘self-centred resolution’ of the great man who had been paying them £8 or £10 a week out of the war-chest. When the betrayal came, and the humble followers had turned their coats, Mr. Parnell and Mrs. O’Shea let them know why he was so ‘reserved’ and ‘lofty’ and ‘aloof’ in their regard. They were ‘the gutter-sparrows,’ ‘the sweeps’ whom he had picked up

and nourished. They were quite as good as he. I told him once he was 'a roundhead,' in allusion to his first ancestor in Ireland, the Cheshire protégé of Regicide Bradshaw. But, good heavens, how they used to crawl ! I always feared that they would offer to brush his boots. For a universal leveller and prairie valuite, he was the least convinced of Catilines. Just enough Catiline to grudge Cicero the consulship, but decidedly not so much Catiline as to die at the head of his desperadoes at Pistoria, all stark and stiff with wounds in front. A little villa at Eltham was infinitely more to his taste. I arrived easily at the conclusion in the spring of 1879 that Parnell had booked a compartment, first-class, in the revolutionary train—on the line for which Davitt, Devoy, Egan, and Ford were directors—but that he would certainly slip off at a junction, when he had gone far enough . . . to suit himself.

At this time, and for a good while afterwards, the best part of my information about the doings of Parnell and his Reds outside the House came from the special friends and partisans of Mr. Butt, and from some distinguished Moderates like Mr. Shaw himself. There was one partisan of Mr. Butt, whose nature was to serve a friend or hate an enemy with passionate fidelity, and whom Mr. Parnell six years later was to drive out of Parliament by one of the foulest, most violent, and most generally unscrupulous contests which ever illustrated an Irish election. This was Mr. Philip Callan, M.P. for the borough of Dundalk in the County Louth. When in 1829 Catholics were admitted to Parliament, his father, Owen Callan of Ardee, had been the first Catholic representative of County Louth since the Battle of the Boyne. Mr. Philip Callan was devoted to Butt, and hated me until he knew that I was an active policy man indeed, but no friend to disunion or rebellion against the old chief. Callan knew the inside of Irish politics, as Charles Greville knew the inside of English politics, at their spiciest time. The *Chronique Scandaleuse* of Dublin can be spicy too ; and what Mr. Philip Callan, barrister-at-law and parliamentarian, did not know, was hardly worth

knowing. Always a *bon vivant*, he was still, at this time, a remarkably handsome and manly man, ready to clear a ditch or cap a retort with any man, on horseback or off. Though often accused of Whiggery, he was curiously deep in the confidence of the most extreme Nationalists in Dublin. There was not a move of the Ribbon Fenians which did not reach his acute hearing, and a good deal of his news travelled to me.

Mr. Shaw's reports from Ireland all through this opening period of the year 1879 were serious and discouraging. As chairman of the Munster Bank, with branches all over the south of Ireland, he was continually in receipt of information from the managers of these branches. They spoke of a great unsettlement of opinion, of expectations of sweeping change, of a disinclination to undertake anything with vigour pending this change. Agriculture was neglected. Business was bad. The shadow of distress, the dread of failure of the potato harvest, combined with discontent which seemed social rather than political. The banking business was not doing well. After Mr. Shaw had openly opposed the rising party of the Land League, twelve months later, had openly broken with Mr. Parnell, and been defeated in the contest for the chairmanship of the party by the votes of the new supporters of Parnell who had come in from the General Election of 1880, I heard that the badness of the banking business became worse in the case of the Munster Bank, that Land League runs were organised against it, and that difficulties increased to such an extent that the Munster Bank had to cede its possessions and existence to, I think, the Provincial Bank of Ireland. Mr. Shaw, reduced to a mere remnant of his former opulence, died a poor man in London. Through the year 1879 he appeared to have no dread that things would turn out for him quite so badly; but his news showed that serious complications might easily occur.

I learned from a good many quarters that the Fenians, with difficulty distinguished from the Ribbon Fenians, were again very active; and I understood that famous leaders

of the organisation, especially Mr. John Devoy, were going through the country. I heard that Mr. Devoy was 're-organising' in the north of England and Scotland, where I had many personal friends among the Nationalists. I had been for years president of the Glasgow branch of the Confederation, and was a frequent visitor to Newcastle, where Councillor McAnulty's hospitable house invited Irishmen of various opinions. Accustomed by studies in very different fields to draw my conclusions from many petty indications rather than from individual statements, I had formed the opinion that a great strengthening and disciplining of the Fenian organisations was proceeding. Looked at from the point of view of the standard of living and thinking among the Irish population in England and Scotland, I always found that Fenianism tended to sobriety, to solid reading, to self-respect and general improvement of conduct and appearance. A man held himself better, looked better, avoided the taproom better, if he had joined the military movement. Of course, I did not believe in insurrection, though I believed in the value of the support of men who were capable of insurrection. Even Wolfe Tone thought insurrection hopeless without a French army. I not only did not believe in insurrections, I positively despise and dislike them, except in fine mountain climates, amid rocks and clouds, as in the Tyrol or Balkan Mountains, where a tough and unconventional race of splendid primevalists had much better demonstrate with rifles than descend to the miserable tricks of constitutional countries. Such men are natural soldiers. Otherwise, as a student of real soldiership, I simply detest the idea of fellows in civilian clothes, who were behind counters or wheeling barrows a moment before, suddenly taking shots either at neighbours or at real soldiers; when one of those men with muskets ought straightway to be hanged for presuming to try to fight except under discipline and in uniform. The very victory of such insurgent yokels and grocerlings is almost invariably a disaster to their own country in the first place. It is in the hour of victory that an insurgent

becomes really terrible . . . to his own side as well as the other. When Robert Emmet and his mob started on their insurrection, the gallant dreamer hoped to take Dublin Castle, but his mob only piked to death the good and venerable Lord Kilwarden. When a foreign army of invasion comes to Ireland, there will at least be some guarantee of having a regular provost-marshal handy to string up an inconvenient 'man with a musket' occasionally, just as a silently persuasive example. No civilian insurrections, thank you, for me. They are quite too messy.

From the presence of Dr. Carroll of Philadelphia at the conference with the Fenian delegates the previous year, from the questions which he put to me and the explanations which he wanted, I suspect that I got to understand what his friends were contriving, at least as well as he probed the recesses of my contemplations. When I found that Mr. John Devoy's 'Articles of New Departure' precisely ignored what I particularly recommended, and precisely recommended what was absolutely impracticable and a breach with all law and order, the demonstration of the Transatlantic situation was tolerably complete. I suppose I had been culpable of misprision of treason, barratry, and offences against the coinage at the very lowest estimation. But afterwards I should have much regretted not having had that conversation with the chivalrous Mr. John O'Leary and his Pennsylvanian colleague. I received hosts of indications that the militants were again preparing to prepare to be ready to go on the war-path. One fine big fellow from an Irish midland county used to tell me whenever I met him how they had safely boxed up and buried deep 'another dozen of the best rifles,' and when I solicitously hoped that he put plenty of well-greased woollens round them, he always assured me they would 'keep for twenty years,' which did not betoken any immediate march on Aldershot or the Curragh. I knew quite early that Mr. John Devoy was hovering round. Crossing near the end of Sackville Street, Dublin, one day with Surgeon Kelly, a very able Galway man who acquired a great practice in San Francisco

and New York, my friend whispered : ' Look, there is John Devoy.' As I am short-sighted, I only had the impression of a shortish stout man walking with rapid step. I wished very much to meet Mr. Devoy, ever since I had heard from that well-known and most competent military writer, Mr. George Hooper of the *Daily Telegraph*, that his was the only strategical brain of the Fenian conspiracy of 1866-67, and that he had offered the Fenian executive a plan for surprising the arsenals and arming the insurgents which might have had, and could have had, terrible if short-lived success. Mr. Devoy, as I have mentioned, had been a legionary in Algeria, had enlisted as a British soldier to spread Fenianism in the garrison of Ireland, had obtained immense success in his propaganda, and now came to the Fenian chiefs with this proposal. There were 16,000 soldiers ready to revolt. He could assemble 2000 men of the Dublin garrison with their arms and ammunition within an hour at the principal railway head-stations out of Dublin. Wires would be cut and railway bridges broken behind the trains conveying the revolted troops to the three main arsenals of Ireland, where 30,000 rifles with ammunition and provisions were accumulated, say, at Athlone, Maryborough, and Limerick Junction—I forget the precise localities except Athlone. All the arsenals had partially or mainly disaffected garrisons, and the arrival of the storming columns would have found open gates and ready comrades. An insurrection, supported by 16,000 trained soldiers, 30,000 military rifles with ammunition, and at least 300,000 peasants and workmen, would have been a colossal danger. In America the Fenian host would have become a mighty menace. General Phil Sheridan stood pledged to lead the national insurrection in such circumstances. France was ultra-friendly to Ireland, with Marshal MacMahon as its foremost general, and Napoleon III, who had vowed to avenge Waterloo, on, as yet, the foremost throne of Europe. Great conflagrations have started from smaller beginnings. Mr. Hooper had worked out John Devoy's plan of campaign as if it had been composed by the Prussian General Staff, and deliberately pronounced it feasible

when it was made. He had found from inquiries that Athlone was entirely at the mercy of a Fenianised garrison. Fortunately the Fenian executive adjourned the consideration of Devoy's proposal for a week or fortnight. Before it came up for that consideration, the Fenian executive and the leading sub-leaders were in the safe custody of the British Government. An informer, unmindful of the delays demanded by councils of war, had given warning, which produced immediate action by the authorities. It was also found that the Fenian executive, comprising, I believe, a novelist and two editors, had thoughtfully accumulated in its offices about 1000 opened letters from its local agents in all parts of Ireland; and the local constabulary had only to gather in the harvest of arrests—which is another feather in the cap of civilian insurrection.

Many years subsequently I met Mr. Devoy, who had suffered five years' penal servitude for the dignified deliberateness of the Fenian executive. He was a most kindly, courteous, and well-read gentleman, who admitted that Mr. George Hooper's narrative had been entirely accurate. In 1879 Mr. Devoy had varied his former proceedings from debauching the loyalty of soldiers to exciting the cupidity of tenants; and had thereby certainly made completer hash of every kind of law and order in Ireland than by his military manœuvres.

To return to the parliamentary position at Westminster. On May 5, the sad event which had been so long foreseen happened at last. Isaac Butt slept the last sleep at the age of seventy-six, and the last bond which kept the Home Rule party together was practically destroyed by the death of its noble-hearted and kindly chief and founder. He was carried to the grave in his native Donegal, and his well-understood wish had still enough of influence to ensure the acceptance of Mr. Shaw as his successor in the chairmanship of the party for the current session. Before the session had closed, however, it was known to all the world that the devil was loose in Ireland and that the genius, the labour, the services, the solicitations and pleadings and

arguments for union and reconciliation, the courage and the courtesy which won so many hereditary foes to the side of a new Inisfail of brotherhood and strength—all, all had been thrown away. The harsh yell of hate was to silence the voice of patriotism, while a flood-tide of imported money was to drown the scruples of vulgar consciences and stimulate the instincts of anarchy and greed. Perhaps the last consolation afforded to the dying statesman was caused by Mr. Shaw's submission, for his approval, of the candidature for a vacancy in Longford County of Mr. Justin McCarthy, the novelist and literary writer. Thanks to Butt's consent and Shaw's recommendation, Mr. McCarthy was elected without a contest. It was generally accepted that the moderate author of 'The History of Our Own Times,' that gentle and decorous compilation, would bring the aid of his even temperament and his placid style to the side of unaggressive counsels. Before a year had passed, however, he had taken from Mr. Parnell's hand the vice-chairmanship of the Land League parliamentarians, and thenceforth followed with amiable docility the frantic squad which had made irruption into the places of Home Rule. It was not till he heard the command of Mr. Gladstone to depose Parnell as well, that he turned against the bestower of his vice-chair as he had turned against Mr. Shaw. But still his destiny was to rise in nominal rank; and just as his desertion of Shaw had gained him the second place in the Land League party in Parliament, so his desertion of Parnell made him leader of the McCarthyites; and the most dovelike personage outside of a cloister succeeded to the stormy autocrat who had flouted two dozen bishops and the Nonconformist conscience for the sake of his colleague's accomplished wife. After these adventures, and after having, in rightful rotation, 'held the Cabinet in the hollow of his hand,' Mr. Justin McCarthy, full of years and recollections, stepped down from the throne of Dillon-cum-O'Brienism to the modest dignity of a royal literary pension of £250 a year.

The agitation which was to establish the Land League

in Ireland was purely an artificial agitation. It was the deliberate result of the deliberate excitement of the masses by agents well supplied with outside money, and who were often practical strangers to the country and very often complete strangers to agriculture. The distress which gave their opportunity to the agitators was only too real,¹ but it was not caused by diabolical landlords, but by too much rain. The rain was not a local invention of an alien aristocracy, but was common to the three kingdoms. It had been pouring in the fat lands of Lincolnshire as on the limestone hills of Connamara. British crops were calculated to be worth £60,000,000 less in 1879 than in 1878. Ruin stared in the face thousands of British farmers also. Their discontent also was the opportunity of an agitator, though a less ferocious one in Saxonland than in Erin. Remembering my principles of intervention in British affairs, sympathising with the sorrowful Britons, and desirous to empty a few score of Tory seats at the next election, I preached the gospel of the Farmers' Alliance to influential spokesmen of the English agricultural interest. Further details will be given when I have finished an account of the main work this session of the Parliamentary party under Mr. Shaw, namely the arrest of the Army Discipline Bill for injustice and cruelty and the final condemnation of flogging in the Army. The foundation and rise of the Land League will form the subject of another chapter, which will be followed by a special examination of the actual condition of the Irish territorial aristocracy, its essential feebleness in face of a popular revolt, and how it came into this condition since the Act of Union.

In an historical narrative which is devoted to the account

¹ In one of the opening circulars or manifestoes addressed by the nascent Land League to the agricultural community, the 'Appeal to the farmers of Ireland,' it was cynically boasted that a fine 'opportunity' for attacking the owners of land had been produced by the combined influence of Free Trade and the bad weather: 'Foreign competition has supplemented the disastrous effects of bad harvests. . . . The price of land has also fallen in consequence of the lowering of farm produce.' Free Trade, for which O'Connell agitated, and a double dose of unseasonable rain: these were the crowning crimes of the villainous landlords!

and explanation of large concatenations and enchainments of events, of causes extending over wide areas and considerable time, of vast movements of opinion or violence, it is necessary often to do the injustice of silence and oblivion to numerous and deserving individuals. The space accorded to leading personages is necessarily excessive, if courtesy were to prevail. Brilliant speeches, careful reasonings, statistical disquisitions which had their weight in their day, must be left in the background or in the wings of the representation. I cannot undertake the duties of an Irish Parliamentary 'Hansard,' and perhaps I should not greatly increase the number of readers of the rescued masterpieces if I did. I would, however, be permitted to give the tribute of grateful affection and regret to one most courteous and most serviceable comrade, whose rapidly failing health this very year was another cause of sorrow to all that was best in the party of Mr. Butt. I refer to the chief whip of the Home Rule Parliamentarians, the tireless, the debonair Lord Francis Conyngham, second son of the Marquis Conyngham, and married to a beautiful and clever wife, daughter of the first Lord Tredegar. Tall, dark, handsome, there was a touch of ancient formalism in his attitude, in his desire to serve and assist every colleague. He had been a naval officer of a dozen years of active service, and it was probably that larger acquaintance with outward men and things, so frequent in the wandering sailor who has used his eyes, which made him one of my special cronies from the first. Add to the navy life his experience as captain in a Militia regiment and as a deputy-lieutenant in two Irish counties, and you will have a combination of practical attainments, of practical acquaintance and familiarity with Irish life, different, it must be owned, from the communistic ravings of a Lancashire mill-hand or the speculations in pure administration of a Tammany man from New York. Lord Francis had no qualifications for parliamentary or popular oratory. His voice was gentle and his speech hesitant. But he performed with easy and constant diligence the wearisome duties of an

attentive whip, and he watched with the keen interest of genuine patriotism the fortunes of Home Rule. In this session he was visibly weak in health, and he was not long to witness the rending of the party and the rending of the country.

A sinister indication of the approaching desertion of the Irish cause, or what professed to be the Irish cause, by all the classes which were disinclined to anarchy by convictions or position, was afforded—I believe on the very day of the election of Mr. Justin McCarthy—by the culmination of a violent quarrel between the party and Right Hon. Lord Robert Montague, P.C., M.P. for Westmeath, one of the earliest Home Rulers. If men like him, already won to our ideas, could not be retained, what were the chances of extensive conversions of open opponents? The policy of making Ireland such a wilderness of anarchy as to necessitate its abandonment by civilised persons was hardly an alternative to be recommended to the opinion of Europe. Lord Robert had been growing restive for some time. The increasing crudities of the gathering agitation, which became perceptible very early in his constituency so familiar to Ribbonism, turned his indignation against Mr. Biggar; and a violent and offensive denunciation of the member for Cavan caused the party to declare that Lord Robert Montague had exceeded the limits of fair protest and to remove his name from its membership. The son of a Duke of Manchester was hardly likely to admire the member for Cavan's shocks to polite sentiment, but the incident was only too significant of the turn the situation had taken. As a politician who desired the support of all classes of the community which could be brought to the side of Ireland, I thought that the affair was deplorable. Very soon we should have Colonel King Harman, a secretary of the Home Rule Conference of 1873, striding back to the anti-Irish quarters of the House, and leading the cry that the Irish did not understand self-government and did not desire the liberty and security of their fellow-countrymen. We were going to pay dear for the American dollars. I

think I may say that I was more than angry at the whole fatality which drove Lord Robert Montague out of the party and out of Home Rule. I felt bound to resent the offensive tone which he had adopted to Biggar. Biggar, I knew, was hampered by his want of culture of every kind, but meant well, and was far from impervious to remonstrance and argument. But the thing was done, and worse was to follow. It should be remembered that Lord Robert Montague had been enthusiastic in his adoption of the Irish cause, and he came into collision with Disraeli himself in the defence of Irish ideas. In the quarrel Disraeli made use of one of his most cynical and celebrated phrases. Lord Robert, early in 1874, had demanded from the new Premier if he was going to carry into execution those broad intimations, which he had uttered during the recent elections, of a desire to recast on popular lines the Government of Ireland. With mocking coolness and his best assumption of airy insolence, the Premier had answered, in effect, that electioneering speeches became ancient history once they had helped their author into office. ‘It is,’ he remarked, ‘some time since the observations referred to were made, and a good deal has happened in the interval.’ The heat with which Lord Robert Montague had resented the quip attested his own thoroughgoing zeal for popular government in Ireland. Now it was all over. What completed the vexation of every Home Ruler who was competent to appreciate the situation was the open glee with which the departure of men like Lord Robert Montague was welcomed by the Parnellites both in the House and in the constituencies.

I can really speak of the Parnellites in the year 1879. There were very few to go by that name in the Parliamentary party; but the name had been self-conferred on an increasing number of persons outside who might or might not become important and powerful according to the drift of circumstances. Circumstances were already drifting in the Parnellite direction, thanks to the policy, impolicy, or no-policy of her Majesty’s Disraelian Ministry in the

first place. Every measure of Irish reform which had obtained the sanction of the most practical and conservative authorities in Ireland—measures approved by Shaws, Butts, McCarthy Downings, Mitchell Henrys, O'Connor Dons, King Harmans, and the like—had been treated during five years with superior disapproval under Mr. Chief Secretary Hicks-Beach, with rollicking ridicule by Mr. Chief Secretary Lowther, just fresh from failure in the Under-Secretaryship for the Colonies. Anger, exasperation, and the desire of revenge had been spread in wider and wider masses of the Irish nation by the offensive combination of incompetence, impolicy, and impoliteness. The protest raised in the House itself by the three obstructionists, as we were indiscriminately and inaccurately designated, found a curiously and grimly exaggerated echo among all sorts of indignant multitudes on both sides of the Atlantic and even in the infant commonwealths of the Pacific. The maxim of Mr. Matthew Harris that 'a Catholic people wanted a Protestant leader, and a peasant people wanted a landlord leader' happily summarised the statesmanlike instinct of the vast majority. They wanted their 'bit of a county gentleman,' and they were sure that they had got him. In a succeeding chapter will be told the origin and development of the Land League which formed behind the figure-head of Mr. Parnell, under the direction of that unpromising body, a coalition. Two events of first-rate importance both for the new policy and the immediate future of British politics were, meantime, to happen in close connexion with the legitimate drama of legislation at Westminster: the opposition to flogging in the Army, which soon enlisted the strongest sympathies of the working class, and the foundation of the Farmers' Alliance with a special view to the requirements of county consumers in Great Britain. The spiced and peppered commodities demanded by the agrarian taste of Mr. Michael Davitt and Mr. Patrick Ford were evidently unsuited to the bucolic market of England and Scotland, which was accustomed to more placid and less

stimulating diet. The Farmers' Alliance was created for this calmer sphere. Why offer curry, when rice-and-milk is suggested by the diagnosis ?

Before dealing with the struggle over the flogging clauses of the Army Discipline Bill, I must mention for its momentous consequences to Ireland the repeal of the Irish Convention Act, which constituted, along with the University Destruction and Degradation Act, already discussed in the previous chapter, the main contribution of the session to legislation concerning Ireland. It is needless to repeat what had to be said of the University measure. It was so purely bad and injurious in comparison with what it destroyed,¹ it was so inadequate and illusory in regard to what it pretended to effect, that it crowned quite appropriately the existing ignorance, so long maintained by Union rule in Ireland, and even added new features of hurtfulness and wrong. Under the name of the Royal University of Ireland, its chief creation was summarily and treacherously slaughtered in its turn a while ago by the Parliament which begat it: in favour, it is almost superfluous to say, of a still inferior successor.

The Act of the Irish Parliament known as the Convention Act had been passed in the storm and stress of the panic and repression which accompanied and followed the conspiracy of the United Irishmen to invite an invasion

¹ In connexion with the assertion that the scanty attendance at the Queen's Colleges was due to conscientious objections—this being the pretext for sectarianising Irish university education—I have already pointed out that the State endowment of the Queen's Colleges provided only thirty entrance scholarships of £24 each—a miserable total of £720 for the whole of Ireland—and that the poor students of impoverished Ireland simply could not follow the courses of a university which was practically unendowed when compared with the mass of the Irish population. My attention has just been called to the following sentence in the inaugural address delivered by Professor Sir J. J. Thomson before the British Association on August 25 last year: 'The colleges in the University of Cambridge alone give more than £35,000 a year in scholarships to undergraduates, and I suppose the case is much the same at Oxford.' Seventy thousand pounds a year in scholarships for undergraduates in Oxford and Cambridge, and a few miserable hundreds of pounds for the undergraduates of all Ireland. And then we are told by the British stepmother of Irish education that it is only our religious squeamishness which excludes us from the bounteous feasts of reason provided by British protection . . . and generosity !

of Ireland by the armies of the French Revolution. It forbade the election of delegates to a central convention as well as the meeting of any such convention of elected delegates. It was intended to prevent the establishment of any body resembling a national assembly which might contest the authority of the Parliament of Ireland. When the Union was declared to be the law of the land, the Convention Act was assumed to continue to prohibit Irish conventions of delegates, though there were no longer any meeting of the Parliament of Ireland to complain of an illegitimate competition. For more than three-quarters of a century, accordingly, the Irish had been forbidden to have any elected assembly to speak in their collective name upon any subject or question. A motion for its repeal was to be expected among the natural activities of a Home Rule party. To the general astonishment the motion this session was accepted by the Government and passed into law. Probably this result was largely due to the eloquent and ingenious pleading of Mr. Cowen, M.P. for Newcastle-on-Tyne, who skilfully impressed upon the House that the Convention Act did not interfere with meetings however menacing or multitudinous, but only with meetings of delegates. It was as if half a million of angry demonstrators were to be free to pass resolutions in almost any part of London, but a small group of representatives of some pacific trade or profession were not to discuss a peaceful petition to Parliament down at Carlisle or Aberdeen. 'If instead of holding threatening assemblies 500,000 strong, such as gathered round O'Connell thirty years ago, a deliberative council of representative men, sent from different counties in Ireland, met quietly in a room in Dublin, and strove, not by force but by persuasion, not by noise but by argument, not amidst clamour but calmly, to put their case for the repeal of a specific law, or the reform of a social usage, the law would step in and prevent them.' To summarise the scope of the Act in a sentence: 'It might be said to offer a premium to passion and violence, and to have put a penalty upon representation and reason.'

The arguments of Mr. Cowen were so perspicuous and cogent that the Act was repealed with hardly a protest. The only precaution was that a new Act, which has never been enforced, was provided against such a delegate assembly 'arrogating to itself the attributes or functions of Parliament.'

Unfortunately for the representation and reason of Mr. Cowen's eloquent plea, the repeal of the Convention Act coincided with the coming of the Land League; and this very year of 1879 was to witness, thanks to this very repeal, the opening number in the lengthy series of Land League and semi-Land League conventions, stuffed with branch delegates and rigged by the Dublin Tammany, which have squelched every sort of free opinion in Ireland with a forceful facility unimagined and unforeseen by the most repressive legislators who framed the original prohibition of 'representation and reason.' Close conventicles of the initiates and stipendiaries of the Land League Directory, inspired by the dollars of the Irish-American collection, selected by the merry men of Mr. Patrick Ford and Mr. Patrick Egan, furnished with programmes and agenda which had been concocted between Henry George and O'Donovan Rossa, furnished, too, with the sufficient bodyguard of 'good lookers-on' who prevented unauthorised deviations from the authorised curriculum; such were the organs of freedom empowered to choose the 'representatives' of that 'faculty and discourse of reason' for national conventions which tore the nation into shreds and sections, and made the deliberative expression of Ireland precisely equivalent to the deliberative expression of a New York ward, when Boss Murphy or Boss Croker has instructed his henchmen what they are to vote and whom they are to elect. The last of the free assemblies of Home Rule Ireland was precisely that Conference of Irish representatives—not delegates—which met in the Rotunda at Dublin in 1878, the year *before* the repeal of the Convention Act! Since Ireland obtained from a Saxon Parliament full liberty to express her free opinion in

a free assembly of Irish delegates, there has been no free opinion and no free assembly. I have seen Mr. Parnell give the signal to the henchmen to silence by clamour the voice of Mr. Metge, M.P., his own colleague in the parliamentary representation of the County Meath. Who has not heard of that National Conference of 2500 delegates who were called a couple of years ago to discuss the proposed Bill for establishing an Irish Administrative Council, which would have administered half the Irish estimates and boards on representative lines? The 'discussion' consisted in Mr. Redmond, though chairman, personally moving the rejection of the measure, without discussion, debate, or argument! Somebody had signalled, and the delegates obeyed. That is the actual outcome in Ireland of the repeal of the Irish Convention Act at Westminster! But let us return to the history of the session of 1879.

If I open such an authoritative record of the educated opinion of England as the parliamentary summary of the *Times* for the session of 1879, and turn to the notice of the debates on the Army Discipline Act, I find this sentence, which fairly illustrates the absolute hopelessness of obtaining any approach to fair consideration of the action of Irish members who are Irish above everything else. I do not hesitate to quote the *Times*, because, though it is the habitual enemy of Ireland, it is, according to its lights—I have always admitted it—an honest enemy, as well as a fair exponent of much of the best English opinion.

The resistance to flogging (it writes) on the part of men like Mr. Chamberlain was intelligible enough, but the amendments proposed by Mr. Parnell and some of his Irish colleagues, and supported by the votes of a mere handful of members, could hardly be explained otherwise than as part of a plan for burking the Bill. . . . The amendments of Mr. Parnell, Mr. O'Donnell, Major O'Gorman, Mr. Sullivan, Mr. Biggar, and Mr. Callan were scarcely in a single instance adopted by the House, and were rarely backed by a respectable minority of members.

Why, in Heaven's name, should resistance to the cruel and disgraceful lash—the lash which had torn the streaming back and sides of thousands of Irish as well as British soldiers—be 'intelligible enough' when the resistance came from Englishmen like Mr. Chamberlain, but unintelligible when it was offered by Irishmen? Were we completely outside the pale of the human race? Now I am going to tell the veritable history of the opposition to the Army Discipline Bill of 1879, an opposition which continued precisely so long as the flogging clauses were not thoroughly dead. Of course, the *Times* neither knew nor cared that I had not confined myself to opposing flogging in the Army in this year of 1879, but that I had saved thousands, and probably tens of thousands, of wretched Indian prisoners from whip and rod by my unaided exposure of an abominable abuse of punishment.¹ Yet English ministers, opposed to my policy in the extreme degree, had warmly welcomed my revelations, and had effected the reforms I demanded. Lord Hartington, as Secretary for India, had subsequently thanked me before the whole House. I have often found English politicians a thousand times more just than English editors.

What, then, is the inner history of the opposition to flogging and the flogging clauses of the Army Discipline Bill? It is this. Within the group or party—Mr. Peter Taylor, Mr. Chamberlain, Mr. Parnell, Mr. Hopwood, Mr. Rylands, Mr. Burt, Sir Charles Dilke, &c.—who formed the active and visible bulk and body of the anti-flogging opposition, there was a secret committee, consisting of Mr. Alexander MacDonald, M.P., Mr. Joseph

¹ In the *Humane Review* for January 1906, there is an article on Corporal Punishment in India, in which a well-informed writer says: 'It will hardly be believed that in the year 1879, when the average daily strength of male convicts in Bengal was 16,604, flogging was inflicted as a gaol punishment no less than 8324 times. So scandalous a state of things attracted attention in this country, and it was mainly due to the efforts of Mr. F. Hugh O'Donnell, who was then a member of Parliament, that this brutal and wholesale resort to corporal punishment was put down. The annual number of gaol floggings has now dwindled to 167.' From over 8000 to under 200! Will the *Times* hasten to add that it is 'unintelligible'?

Cowen, M.P., and the present writer, inside the House, and certain workmen leaders, notably the secretary of the London Trades Council, outside the House. It was our mission to study public opinion, and excite it; to prolong discussion and procrastinate decision, whip up recruits and suggest hostilities; to produce delay so long as public opinion was not ripe or was ill informed, provoke crises without provoking too much; to force the humanitarian consideration into every phase of the debate; to make scenes when scenes seemed advisable, and to moderate when moderation promised further time or evaded sudden difficulty; in a word, to obstruct until public sentiment was thoroughly aroused, and act with vigour when the moment for action had arrived. One of our reasons for keeping Mr. Parnell well on the external side of our committee was precisely because we had seen him at work for three sessions; and while entirely believing in his deep-seated hatred of the cruelty of the cat, we knew that he loved to be in the full limelight all the time; and that he could not be trusted to efface himself in the interest of the general strategy of the campaign, if he thought that a scenic display would turn on the limelight. We knew that now he had learned the ways of the House, he would do everything which could show his genuine loathing of a degrading and horrible punishment and his eminence as a political and parliamentary figure as well. Now we felt too black and bitter a hate of the flogging cat for its own beastly sake to run any risks in a struggle we meant to be decisive. First there was Mr. Cowen. It is superfluous to explain to anybody who knew Joseph Cowen how intense were his wrath and detestation at everything that hurt humanity or outraged the dignity of man; and it is hopeless to explain to one who does not know. Properly speaking, the first and foremost of us was Mr. Alexander MacDonald, M.P. for Stafford, 'the Miners' Member,' who had worked as a common pitman in the Lanarkshire pits. All our anger and loathing were nothing to his feelings, for Alexander MacDonald had a flogged

father to avenge. There was no descriptive reporter on the leading journal to record some of the scenes in the lobbies of the House during the more passionate discussions when the delay of the Bill had given time for outside sympathy to work, and when Alexander MacDonald, maddened by the obstinate resistance of 'the generals and colonels,' rushed up to prominent defenders of floggings with clenched fists and blazing eyes, swearing that he would stump the constituencies of 'every cruel, murderous flogger of the workmen's sons and brothers.' One terrible day in the House Alexander MacDonald had told the story of his father's cruel shame. He had been a sailor on a ship of war. Some trifling quarrel with a superior had brought him to the court-martial and the sentence of fifty lashes of the cat-o'-nine-tails at the hands of the burly boatswain's mates. Cut to the bones, to the ribs, MacDonald's father bore the scars to his dying day. 'I worked as a lad with my father many a day in the pits,' MacDonald told the House, 'and well I remember that, no matter what the heat and the sweat of work, my father always kept wearing a bit of a shirt about his chest and sides. He would not let a fellow-workman see the scars of the wounds.' MacDonald was rather a follower of Cowen, and Cowen was ready to go all lengths for this reason, in addition to the general objection to the cat. These were indeed intelligible facts. I had my personal experience, too, of those soldier-tragedies. My soldier-nurse, my father's batman, had been, a few months before, the smartest soldier in the Fighting Fifth. A glass of drink, a word, a blow, a mad struggle with the picket. The court was merciful! The ruined man got 'only' twenty-five lashes. Poor brave MacMullan from the County Down! Shamed to the very death, he drooped and sank from that awful day. His captain, who liked and respected him, did all he could to hearten him and console. In vain. Before three years were past from the hour they loosed him from the black triangles, the broken soldier was in his grave.

Of course I moved amendments 'that were not accepted by the House.' But they were amendments which furthered the end that we had in view. Remember that we were deliberately exciting the sentiments of the workmen's world to counterbalance and break down the tradition of the disciplinarians who commanded the majority in Parliament. Take my amendment, my 'scandalous and monstrous' amendment, as insulted military members justly called it. I had merely provided that officers as well as soldiers should be liable to flogging with the cat. Yes, but Cowen told the northern miners through his *Newcastle Chronicle* that the cat was only for workmen's brothers and workmen's sons, and could quote the rejection of my amendment to prove that there was one law for the rich and another for the poor. The Trades Council of London sent the news of the fight 'for the honour of the democracy' into every workshop in vast constituencies. The whips on both sides began to report that 'a very ugly feeling was growing abroad' and that 'the men were fighting shy of it.' The men began to examine flogging with new illumination. Two colonels whom all the House respected, Colonels Mure and Alexander, came forward to declare that they were convinced that twenty-five lashes would be quite sufficient. It was twenty-five lashes that killed MacMullan! Colonel Stanley, the courteous Secretary for War, adopted the suggestion. We only raised a shout of protest and derision. Mr. Hopwood moved a splendid amendment. Declaring that twenty-five lashes ought not to mean nine times twenty-five lashes, he moved that the cat-o'-nine-tails should be abolished, and that an instrument which could inflict only one stroke each of the twenty-five times should be employed. We had fifty-one votes for Hopwood. Parnell moved a splendid amendment. To ensure that only thoroughly bad characters should be flogged, he moved that flogged men should be expelled from the army. A man bad enough to be flogged was too bad to be a soldier. Again we had something over fifty. What mattered that the majority was 250 or 300?

The workshops and factories were humming with anger behind us, and we were gathering determination with every day. The majority must bow down. Very soon we knew that Hartington and Bright were doubting more and more the value of the colonels on such a matter of discipline. There was discipline and discipline.

The crisis of the Bill came at the beginning of July, and it was an Irish member, Mr. Callan, M.P. for Dundalk, who brought it on. He had traced the pattern cats for the Army, Navy, and Marines to their official abodes at the War Office and the Admiralty, and now he demanded that the pattern cats should be brought to the House for inspection by the members of Parliament. 'Just to enable them to understand what they were asked to inflict upon the soldier.' It was an inspiration of genius, and rapturously we rallied round Callan and the pattern cats exhibition. Instantly the London Trades Council sent out the fiery cross; and Mr. Cowen came down early to say 'that we might go any lengths now, that the workmen would throw the colonels into the Thames if the cats were not thrown there first.' It was arranged that I should provoke the biggest scene in which the Government could be induced to co-operate. 'I should threaten the House with the people.' I had been extremely and deliberately moderate down to this. I played the part of a useful stop-gap, ready to say something when debate was flagging. Afterwards I was astonished to find that Hansard had registered no less than 160 speeches of mine in the course of the Bill. I had been so studiously mild that my observations must have been quite unobserved. I had not observed them myself. How often I must have kept the ball rolling! We renewed the demand for the cats exhibition. The Government, doubting much that their good old Tories would coolly vote for the cats after seeing and handling the beastly creatures, absolutely refused. 'Hon. members could go to the War Office and Admiralty as the member for Dundalk had done.' Now we knew very well that very few would go out of their way to visit

Mahomet, while if Mahomet visited them, it would be a different affair. We insisted. I was put up. Throwing aside my mildness and moderation, I Jack-Caded to the top of my opportunity. 'If the Government did not bring the cats where members could view the instruments of torture and disgrace to which they were asked to condemn the sons of the people, then this Bill should not progress one inch, and a meeting of 500,000 Londoners . . .' The bait drew. A shout of indignation filled the House. Sir Stafford Northcote moved amid cheers that my words be taken down. Whether expulsion or rustication was to follow did not matter: something awful would be decreed. 'I had threatened the House with mob violence.' Then debate arose, fast and furious. 'The cats must be on view.' 'Menace to the House must be punished as it deserved.' Cowen and MacDonald and all of us knew that the whole country next day would be focussed on the necessity 'of seeing the things they were sentencing soldiers to suffer.' A scene in the House can be very useful.

Meantime also a horrid rumour was spreading through the ranks of the majority. Alexander MacDonald was swearing round the lobbies that Joseph Cowen would pay the expenses—he was very rich—of placarding every flogging member in his own constituency 'represented to the life on a cartoon in the act of flogging a British soldier.' It was too true. Cowen had guaranteed the fell deed, and MacDonald, wild with triumph, was threatening every general and colonel with extermination in effigy. 'Not one of you will ever see Westminster again.' As a general election must come soon, such a threat was simply heartless.

I am afraid that a good many of us were rather unfair to the generals and colonels. Those gallant officers liked flogging no better than we. But passions were roused, and the cat must go, discipline or no discipline. Very quickly the resistance of the stern disciplinarians began to break. Even while my 'menace to Parliament' was

under debate, it was whispered that the cats would be produced for inspection in the cloak-room, where they made their appearance within forty-eight hours, and the fate of flogging was sealed. None of those country gentlemen would consent to have the back of a British soldier lacerated with the beastly fangs when once they had swung a cat with their own hand, and counted the nine tails of hard cord, and the three cruel knots on every one of the nine cutting cords. 'Twenty-seven morsels of flesh have thousands of times been flicked out of a man's back and sides with the whistling cut of those twenty-seven knots of cutting cord.' And all the *Times* had, or has, to say of the men who played a chief part in the ending of that infernal villainy of a brutal age, is that it was only our 'plan for burking the Bill!' If we had planned to burke the Bill down to the lowest hell, were we not entitled to do it before God and man so long as those nine cruel cords and twenty-seven knots 'for flicking out soldier's flesh' remained in the Bill? We, the obstructionists, the rebels, the Catilines, the men 'sans foi et sans loi': *we gave a clean army to the Empire*, we gave the possibility of honour to the private soldier, the possibility of military service to the general State. And now, are our statues going to be erected by a grateful fatherland, say, in the courtyard of Printing House Square?

But I must return to the debate on my suspension, from the House or by the neck, for the sake of narrating a brilliant fancy of wise and witty Sir William Harcourt. The House had drifted into a sad quandary over the terrific 'menace' of the member for Dungarvan. In the first place, it is difficult to be severe with an offender when you are about to admit that his main demand must be granted. In the second place, there were scores of honest Englishmen, on both sides of the House, who hated the cat far more than they did the offending O'Donnell, *hostis publicus* though he might be; and, *horribile dictu*, the rebel was right. The talk went on without end, while I smiled patiently in expectation of my end. By a flash

of genius Sir William Harcourt, always good at need, saw a way out; a way which would have the superlative recommendation of getting the House out of a difficulty and letting the Tory Government look a trifle ridiculous. Rising with his most indulgent and patronising air, the air that boded mischief to the party enemy, Sir William ventured to suggest to the leader of the House that he had been perhaps a little precipitate. His intentions were good, but . . . 'it was unfortunate that Sir Stafford Northcote had not allowed Mr. O'Donnell to finish the offensive sentence.' The leader of the House had checked Mr. O'Donnell just as he had said that, if her Majesty's Government did not produce the cats, then a meeting of 500,000 Londoners . . . would do what? He, Sir William Harcourt, would not answer for the intentions of the member for Dungarvan, giving it clearly to be understood that the last things he would credit me with were any good intentions whatsoever. I had no more sincere non-admirer than the eminent Liberal statesman. Still he, Sir William Harcourt, must point out, before Sir Stafford Northcote might commit the House any further, that grammatically the member for Dungarvan might have intended to conclude his sentence with a fervent desire that the 500,000 Londoners would pass a unanimous vote of confidence in her Majesty's present Administration. 'Why did not the leader of the House at least allow O'Donnell to finish his sentence?' It was true, exhilaratingly true. The House shouted with merriment. Grammatically speaking, it certainly was open to me to conclude with a vote of confidence. Sir Stafford had to admit that perhaps he ought to have waited. Clearly neither strangulation nor the bastinado could be inflicted for an obviously unfinished sentence. Her Majesty's Government resolved to place the cats, Army, Navy, Marine—the whole menagerie—on exhibition; and Sir William Harcourt leaned back on the front Opposition bench, amid the delighted congratulations of his colleagues, with the happy smile of one who has done the State some service,

and, sweeter still, has made somewhat a hare of the other party. A *beau sabreur* was great Sir William, and as gallant and accomplished a chevalier of debate as will ever charge down the tilting-yard of Parliament. But truth to tell, he could not love me less if he had been condemned to hear everyone of my 160 speeches on the Army Discipline Bill.

One hundred and sixty speeches ! We have the criminal caught in the act and gloating over his crime. On the contrary, no crime and no detection. I obstructed deliberately, during three months, this Bill until the flogging clauses were dead. That was my right and my duty to the State and to mankind. Immense and inexpressible as is, and was, my intellectual contempt for the general obstruction of the Parnellite-cum-Dillonite-cum-Sextonite incompetents, I maintain equally that particular or temporary obstruction and delay can be both legitimate and necessary. There could not be a more conclusive instance of legitimate and necessary obstruction than the obstruction and delay of the last attempt to perpetuate flogging in the Army. The Bill had been read a second time on April 7, and at that date the necessity of the lash was admitted and supported by the bulk of the Liberal party as well as by the entire force of the Conservatives. The Marquis of Hartington, Mr. John Bright, Mr. Gladstone were still on the side of the cat-o'-nine-tails. By July 7, even their sombre acquiescence in what they had been taught to be inevitable evil was not only abandoned, but the whole of the Tory party had consented to lift the flogging brand from the British soldier, and to learn to keep military discipline without the cat. How was this brought about ? Certainly not by the official Liberals or the Tories of any kind. It was brought about by the men who were ready to make 160 speeches, or twice that number ; to face suspension and expulsion ; but who were thoroughly determined to give the British masses time to understand the infamy which was pending, time to bring their force to bear upon every person who wanted to continue that

infamy. And because some leading men in that work of mercy and manhood were Irishmen who loved their native land, we got insult and ingratitude, and nothing more. We had worked the greatest reform since the abolition of negro slavery. We had filled quarter of a million of humble homes with the proud conviction that son or brother Jack, or Pat, or Sandy could never more have to fear the lowest and most dishonouring disgrace as a consequence of a piece of folly or a fit of temper. *We had made the Army of the Empire an honourable profession*, and we had laid the indispensable foundation of all the greatest reforms and developments which the future could bring. Crosses of the Legion, Stars of the Orders were no excessive recognition for men like us. We have got nothing but insult and ingratitude.

Nay, I should say that we got nothing but insult and ingratitude from good society, from the eminent statesmen, from the eminent editors ; but in millions of humble homes from Scilly to the Orkneys the cheering went up for Joe Cowen and Sandy MacDonald, and Parnell, and their comrades ; and the bases were laid on which was to arise an organisation of mutual help between the nations of the workers which yet will change for weal or woe the future of the State. For weal or woe ? Did I contemplate this consequence ? How could I not ? Did I not know the meaning of an alliance with the miners' delegates and the London trades ? Had I been vice-president and hon. secretary of an organisation of Irishmen, mostly working-men, who mingled and lived with English and Scots working-men in every hive of industry from the Tay to the Tamar, and had I seen nothing, heard nothing ? I had spoken to mixed multitudes in almost every town-hall in Britain. The British workman and I were old friends, and I had no fear of the result of an appeal to his manhood for the abolition of the lash in the Army. Since that passage at arms for the best kind of democracy, I have been cheered in fifty assemblies of Englishmen and Scotsmen just for that work. ' Shake the fist, mon,' and ' Thee hast

done brawly ' has been shouted to me from groups of big grimy toilers from Tyne to Clyde. I knew the spirit was there, when I invoked it ; and had the Tory Government held out for the cats, or too obstinately refused the cats exhibition we demanded, most assuredly we should have had that meeting of 500,000 Londoners . . . *not* to vote confidence in her Majesty's Government. As the Parliamentary Summary of the *Times* of 1879 admits, ' The greatest excitement was aroused by the controversy touching corporal punishment.' Who created that excitement and gave the nations time to comprehend ? The men of the myriad speeches who would not let the Bill budge a foot till the cats were dead. Let me conclude with a few other sentences from the same Parliamentary Summary, which will complete this chapter of our history.

At first the Government took up a strong position, in which they were supported by the leaders of the Opposition. They contended that flogging was, in the opinion of the highest military authorities, indispensable to the maintenance of discipline in the Army. But when the Bill had been seven weeks in committee Colonel Stanley was apparently worried by the persistency of the opponents of the cat into a series of concessions which were difficult to reconcile with the alleged necessity of maintaining the system originally contemplated and defended by the Government.

In its Review of the Year 1879 the leading journal adds, with sorrow : ' The Home Rule Obstructionists had brought to perfection during the session of 1879 their peculiar strategy.' And the perfection of it was, that we had driven the Government out of ' its strong position,' and had flung the corpse of ' the indispensable cat ' into the scavenger's cart for deceased nuisances. Certainly it was the piece of work which gave me most pleasure in all my life.

BETWEEN THE ACTS : FROM THE PARLIAMENT OF BEACONSFIELD TO THE LAND LEGISLATION OF GLADSTONE

XIII. MY POLICY OF INTERVENTION IN BRITISH POLITICS—THE FARMERS' ALLIANCE

XIV. THE LAND LEAGUE IN 1879—THE AMERICAN FARMERS KILLED IRISH AGRICULTURE—THE AMERICAN FENIANS BLAMED THE IRISH LANDLORDS—THE WORK OF THE DOLLARS

XV. THE ACT OF UNION THE KNELL OF IRISH LANDED ESTATE—THE FOLLY AND THE FALL OF THE IRISH GENTRY

XVI. WITH £100,000 CONTRIBUTED BY IRISH AMERICA PARNELL ATTACKS HIS HOME RULE COLLEAGUES AND DISRUPTS THE HOME RULE PARTY—THE HISTORICAL HOME RULERS OF GRATTAN AND BUTT—THE AGRARIAN PROLETARIANS OF THE LAND LEAGUE AND THE *IRISH WORLD* FUND

XVII. THE SESSION OF 1880—FAILURE OF CROPS IN IRELAND—THE OPPORTUNITY OF DAVITT AND PARNELL

CHAPTER XIII

MY POLICY OF INTERVENTION IN BRITISH POLITICS—THE FARMERS' ALLIANCE

The Policy of Intervention applied to British Agricultural Politics—
Operation of the Farmers' Alliance—To drive a Wedge between
the English Landlords and the English Tenants—How we emptied
sixty Tory Seats at the General Election of 1880.

AT an early page of this history I quoted from my speech at the Home Rule Conference of 1873, in which I maintained that the necessary policy for Irish Nationalists was 'to interfere in English affairs so long as English members interfered in Irish affairs'; and I held up the picture of 'a hundred Irish members interfering in English concerns' as the realisation of a form of retaliation which must alter England's views on the Act of Union, seeing that it was the Act of Union which alone conferred on a hundred *de facto* foreigners the power of intruding into every matter of domestic importance in England. Down to the present I have mentioned a good many matters of Imperial moment and gravity, from the annexation of the Transvaal to flogging in the Army, in which Irish members with whom I acted had intervened, with most notable effects for the unshaping and reshaping of administrative acts of Her Majesty's Government. Whether I revealed myself as taking counsel with President Paul Kruger and his Attorney-General, or as combining with Mr. Joseph Cowen, M.P., and Mr. Alexander MacDonald, M.P., for the alteration of the Army Discipline Bill on a question of fundamental importance, it was made quite clear that my policy of intervention was producing unprecedented results in the confusion, disturbance, and

change of great measures of the British Government. On the South Africa Bill I had seized the opportunity of Mr. Parnell being asleep at his hotel in order to terminate an obstructive contest before the power of the House had been put into execution. On the abolition of flogging I had remained content with the knowledge that Parnell would work his best on such a subject, and I was enabled to carry my hostility to the flogging legislation to the exact point which my colleagues approved, without ever coming to the point at which the power of the House might be seriously invoked against me. From the opening of 1879 I recognised that Parnellism was killing, and had possibly killed Home Rule by its agrarian Jacobinism and Ribbon Fenianism concentrated in the American-Irish programme of the New Departure. Thenceforth I sought colleagues everywhere except in the near neighbourhood of Mr. Parnell, and while continuing to avoid a premature breach with my ambitious apprentice, I knew that the breach was merely a question of time and development. The Land League was in the air, or in the egg. I determined to effect the policy of intervention by my own combinations and my own allies. I determined to retaliate on the Tory Government both for their actions and their inaction in Irish affairs, and I had long since come to the conclusion that the English protectors of the anti-Irish element in Ireland could be easily engaged, with an earnestness more tense than pleasant, in a contest for self-defence in their own England, which would diminish both their ardour and their capacity for mischief-making in my country. In respectful imitation of the late Field-marshal Scipio, I meant to carry the war into Africa. In other words, I resolved to apply Irish intervention to the domestic concerns of English agriculture. Since England had bestowed upon Ireland the services of that paragon of the English agricultural interest, Mr. Chief Secretary Lowther, I determined to respond handsomely by engaging my own services in the agricultural reform of England. A few months later, on the occurrence of the General Election of 1880, widespread consternation in Tory circles, and

widespread exultation in Liberal tabernacles, announced the appearance and the efficacy of a new agricultural organisation called the Farmers’ Alliance, which was ‘ driving a wedge ’ between the English squires and the English farmers, and, as a result, was emptying Conservative saddles by the dozen throughout the county constituencies in England. The well-known organ of the English farming interest, the *Mark Lane Express*, estimated that no less than sixty Farmers’ Alliance men had been returned at the expense of long-established Tories. Sixty members counted as 120 on a division; and the Tory whips registered with consternation the most ruinous revolt of the counties within the memory of the oldest politician. I had founded the Farmers’ Alliance. It had really been far more easy to upset the Tory possession of the English counties than, in the preceding year, to abolish the cat-o’-nine-tails in the British Army.

As I have sufficient documents at hand for the satisfaction of the philosophic student of politics, I proceed to explain the simple proceeding by which I revolutionised the rural paradises of British Conservatism in preparation for the General Election of 1880. The Act of Union which left Irishmen such little influence in their own country had, conversely, enabled one Irishman to resettle the county representation of the dominant nation. To peace with honour had succeeded intervention with a vengeance.

To proceed methodically, so as to obviate the possibility of refutation or denial, perhaps it is advisable in the first place to establish the creation of the Farmers’ Alliance in this very year of 1879. I cannot call a more respectable, methodical, and trustworthy witness than the *Annual Register* for the year. I quote its evidence. At page 87 of its passing record of English history in the making, it writes :—

Another remarkable outcome of the agricultural depression was the formation of a Farmers’ Alliance, having for its objects, as stated in a circular issued by the Provisional Committee :
(1) To secure the better representation of tenant farmers in

Parliament. (2) To stimulate the improved cultivation of the land. (3) To encourage greater freedom in the cultivation of the soil and the disposal of its produce. (4) To obtain the abolition of class privileges involved in the laws of distress and hypothec. (5) To promote the reform of the Game Laws. (6) To obtain the alteration of all legal presumptions which operate unfairly against tenant farmers. (7) To secure to rate-payers their legitimate share in county government. (8) To obtain a fair apportionment of local burdens between landlord and tenant. The first Conference of this new organisation was held in Exeter Hall, on July 2, under the presidency of Mr. James Howard, when the intention was announced of holding meetings in the principal market towns of the United Kingdom. Mr. J. W. Barclay, M.P., stated that they had received the spontaneous adhesion of many of the leading farmers in England, and that their design was to embrace in their alliance the farmers of the three kingdoms.

I think it will be admitted that in drawing up this programme the Provisional Committee, of which I had been a member, showed the judgment and moderation which were so necessary in the circumstances of the case. The artistic touch of Mr. Matthew Harris and Mr. Michael Davitt was not required in this connexion. The British farmer preferred securities for prosperous industry instead of incentives to topsy-turvy revolution. The ideal programme to which he was likely to rise in the year of grace 1879 must be one calculated at once to unite the tenant farmers in its support and to unite the landlords, as far as possible, in its rejection. I had to be moderate enough to rally the farmers and progressive enough to alarm the landlords. I flatter myself that our programme was admirably suited to bring off the double event. What, indeed, would have been the use of a Farmers' Alliance which the British landlords would welcome and adopt? That would not be the way to drive the requisite wedge between the owners and the cultivators which I intended to result in a corresponding cleavage between owner-candidates and tenant-electors in the coming appeal to the rural constituencies. Our programme was just admirable.

I had commenced public operation on St. Patrick's Day, 1879, with a letter to the *Freeman's Journal*, Dublin, in which I engaged the tenant-right organisations of Ireland to regard with benevolence the scheme, which I proceeded to outline for the politico-social transformation of the English county constituencies. Of course, I was not going to rest content with the *Freeman's Journal*, which I was aware did not largely adorn the breakfast-tables of rural Britain. But as there was no organisation as yet in rural Britain, the help and example of the milder variety of Irish agricultural agitators were all the more desirable. I believed that the British agriculturist might like the support, even though he might not adopt all the ideals, of Murty from Cork and Terence from Mayo. As will be seen, the infant organisation of the Farmers' Alliance was even glad to borrow a few hundred Irish farmers to provide the imposing audience at one of its metropolitan meetings in Exeter Hall. The *Freeman's Journal* was powerful among the tenant-right associations of Ireland, those influential and moderate bodies which prevailed before the coming of the prairie renters and the Irish-American dollars. As, however, the tenant-righters were moderate and just in their proposals of agrarian reform, they were sternly, and sometimes insolently, rebuked and rejected by the allied squiredoms of Britain and Ireland. With the coming of the prairie renters and no-renters came the season of endless concessions of reforms and loans to Ireland, which, if they were too unconsidered to do much good to Ireland, at any rate constituted another illustration of the familiar text of the Irish agitator: 'You can get nothing from England by argument.' In my letter of March 17, 1879, I explained briefly to the readers of the *Freeman* that I was convinced that the time had come when a very easy and natural combination could break the unity of the Tory vote in those English counties which were the centre of Tory power, that while Lord Beaconsfield was threatening Ireland with pains and penalties by the dominant Imperialism, his party could be sapped in the English

shires, and that, with reasonable energy and combination, Tory stronghold after Tory stronghold could be captured at the General Election. Lord Beaconsfield's hostility to Ireland could be appropriately counteracted by breaking up the solidity of the English Conservative phalanx, the county vote. Here are my words in the *Freeman* :—

Agricultural distress pervades the British counties. The organs of the farming interests insist upon the necessity of an amelioration of the conditions of land tenure. A forthcoming resolution of Mr. Samuelson, and an amendment by Mr. Chaplin, attest the interest excited by the crisis on both sides of the House of Commons. The artisan population is becoming keenly alive to the connexion between an oppressed and suffering agriculture, and the overcrowding of the town labour market. . . . So far as the idea has developed yet it is believed that a primary conference in London, some time close to the debate on the Irish Land Bill in May next, ought to unite a limited number of delegates of Irish tenant associations and Irish members of Parliament, and representatives of leading popular associations. A public meeting in one of the large London halls would close the proceedings of the conference, and the resolution of common action arrived at would be submitted to and approved by a vast meeting of English and Irish operatives and resident electors. The movement would thus be fairly launched, and the ground would be cleared for a further and general conference to be held during the recess in one of the northern cities, where the delegates of urban and agricultural labour could be assembled in hundreds, and the final plans of a great land campaign be arranged and decided for carrying the reform agitation into the heart of the English counties and the strongholds of landlord power. For generations the Irish tenantry have had to lament the formidable protection extended by the landlordism of Great Britain to the petty tyrants of the Irish fields. Can we hesitate to transport the war to the gates of the great enemy himself, and by lending English farmers and English workmen the aid of our practised organisation and the experienced talents of our land reformers, assist the crushed agriculturists of Britain to redress their injuries while we revenge our own ?

This was quite unambiguous. I wanted a certain amount of Irish help to enable me 'to transport the war to the gates

of the great enemy himself.' It was really more in order to be able to speak to the English farmers as having an army of my own at my back, that I wanted the appearance of Irish auxiliaries at all, at least so far as the rank and file were concerned. There were quite enough of farmer votes in England to dish the Tory party, and too evident an Irish intervention was obviously discountenanced by elementary considerations of prudence. I certainly did want some Irish leaders, especially members of Parliament, and I got the very best of the men I wanted, including Mr. Shaw, M.P., the chairman of the Home Rule party, and Mr. Rowland, afterwards Sir Rowland, Blennerhassett, M.P. Mr. Shaw explained to me that he could not become a member of the proposed Farmers' Alliance, because its programme would have to be more moderate than would suit people in Ireland, and a misconception might become embarrassing for him as the representative of the great agricultural constituency of Cork. 'But he would attend meetings for me and back me in every way he could be useful.' A long list of Irish tenant-right associations passed resolutions in approval of my proposal; and a strong body of Irish farmers helped to give the Alliance a good send-off at our first public meeting.

I had spoken with certain English and Scotch authorities on the wants of the tenant farmers of Britain, especially Mr. J. W. Barclay, M.P. for Forfarshire, who was most influential and most energetic, Mr. J. Howard, of Bedford, a great manufacturer of agricultural instruments and intimately acquainted with the tendencies of English agricultural reformers, and Mr. William Bear, the editor of the *Mark Lane Express*, which was the great newspaper of the British farmers and agriculturists. Mr. William Bear became secretary of the Alliance, and was devoted to the cause from its first inception in practical form. By arrangement with Mr. Bear I addressed a letter to the *Mark Lane Express* for the purpose of explaining the whole matter from the point of view of the originator of the scheme. My letter to the English agricultural organ was, in fact, a

near replica of my programme-letter to the Dublin *Freeman*, only with special adaptations to its new auditory ; urging the union of the English and Irish tenants against the existing land system, and laying stress upon the fact that it was the English county members who were the backbone of the opposition to a change of the Land Laws in Ireland. This letter is too significant to be much curtailed, and as it goes to the root of the whole matter I give it almost in full. I was engaged in breaking down the force of the Conservative Cabinet, which had met every appeal for Irish reform with contemptuous negation, and I felt thoroughly justified in making use of English instruments when I could get them.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE *Mark Lane Express*.

SIR,

The interest excited by the grave condition of agriculture, the terrible evils which an unjust land system has long inflicted, the immense power of the English farming classes to enforce a reform of agricultural relations, coupled with their marvellous neglect to protect themselves, their country, and their oppressed fellows—these and similar reasons lead me to invoke your fairness and public spirit for permission to address a few observations to your wide circle of readers. The depressed and suffering state of agriculture is the great domestic topic of the day. . . . The permanent interest of these kingdoms is based upon the prosperity of the cultivating and producing community, and that prosperity is not only checked, but retrograding, while the slightest essay to provoke a moderate improvement is scouted from the Legislature—scandalous to relate—by an overwhelming majority of the representatives elected by the British tenantry themselves. . . . I have some special right, as an Irish national representative, to address the English farmers. . . . Who are the most virulent opposers of every Irish reform ? The English county members. Who systematically refuse every measure of justice and equality to the Irish people ? The English county members. Who continually excite discontent and disaffection in Ireland by their stolid hostility to every popular demand, and then have nothing to suggest but a Coercion Act to meet the trouble they have raised ? The English county members. But while sowing discontent and disaffection in the Empire, how do those representatives

of the English county constituencies behave towards their own electors? Who pass sham agricultural Acts? Who insist upon quartering their ground game upon the hard-earned crops of the English farmers? Who oppose county government reforms? . . . It is industriously circulated that the interests of Irish and British farmers do not exactly coincide. But is this a reason for refusing co-operation, so far as common benefits can be obtained by common action? Of course there may be national and local peculiarities which may be required to be treated apart. Thus the ground-game nuisance, so destructive in England, excites small notice in Ireland. . . . On the other hand, by the adoption of the principle of a rational co-operation, the nucleus of a powerful tenant-right party is at once secured in the Imperial Parliament. Sixty Irish tenant-righters, some thirty Scotch, and perhaps fifty English—the latter principally consisting of the representatives of our town popular constituencies—here are not less than a hundred and forty land reformers who will quickly rise to be the majority of the House, as soon as the English farmers have done their part of the common programme in the English counties. . . . If Irish land reformers are too thorough, if Scotch ones are too limited in their views, why not have a great Land Conference where all great agricultural interests can be consulted in common, and where a fair and just medium can be struck for the guidance and co-operation of all? The landlords cannot justly object to your union, the English farmers have always been conspicuous for their regard for every real or apparent right of the landlord. . . . The agricultural interest believes no longer in Whig or Tory. When the agricultural interest once comes to believe in itself and to practise the co-operation which is alone wanting for the exercise of its irresistible power, a new era will have opened for the cultivators of Great Britain and Ireland.

Yours faithfully,

F. HUGH O'DONNELL.

HOUSE OF COMMONS :

April 3, 1879.

I trust that the courteous reader has not failed to perceive the thoughtful considerateness with which I sought the forms of expression which might least remind the British bucolic mind that it was being addressed by an Irish Nationalist daily qualified by the British press as an enemy to the most sacrosanct institutions of the Britons

fatherland. If I admitted that there were 'national and local peculiarities which required to be treated apart,' I hastened to add that the 'peculiarities' merely cropped up in connexion with such matters as the relative importance of the ground-game question in the two countries. I did not mention that I regarded the Act of Union, for instance, as a species of 'ground game,' which might be lawfully extirpated with any weapon or engine, from a popgun to a leading article. What really interested me, what disturbed my rest and oppressed my meditation, was the iniquity of the English landowners, who, not content with blocking the welfare of Ireland, had been so far from showing themselves worthy of the virtues and the long-suffering of the British tenant farmers. The suggestion of the formation of the United Tenant party in Parliament, which might soon be the majority of Parliament, was especially approved, I was told, by the most influential men in the farming world. Neither was it Utopian or improbable. If the Irish had not rushed headlong into the isolation of the Land League with its repulsive violence and its Dead Sea fruits, there might very easily have been the United Tenant party with all the power and influence which I had suggested. For the rest, I was entirely candid and open. Nobody can accuse me with truth of having concealed or deceived anybody. I played an open game. I wanted an organisation in England to break the English territorial vote, and I got it.

The *Mark Lane Express* published my letter in its issue of Monday, April 7, 1879, with the following recommendation of my views :—

It is only too obvious that no effectual agricultural reforms can be obtained from the present Parliament, and it will be advisable to drop all projects of the kind for the rest of its existence, concentrating all efforts upon the best means of getting better representation in the next Parliament. A letter from Mr. O'Donnell, M.P., which we publish to-day, calls attention to this subject. Whether English, Scotch, or Irish landlord reformers can work harmoniously together remains to be seen, but there is no reason why they should not confer as

Mr. O'Donnell proposes, with a view to deciding whether a combination is practicable and desirable.

This was most satisfactory and fair. As had been arranged by me, a preliminary conference took place at the Inns of Court Hotel, after the sitting of the Farmers' Club for the purpose of considering my proposals, as the accompanying letter from Mr. Bear, the editor of the *Mark Lane Express*, and subsequently secretary of my organisation, testifies with perfect distinctness :—

BELMONT VILLAS :
April 1, 1879.

DEAR SIR,

Can you meet a few gentlemen on Monday next, after the Farmers' Club meeting is over, about 6 P.M., at the Inns of Court Hotel, Holborn, to talk over your proposed Land Conference? Please let me know by return of post if you can. The Farmers' Club meeting begins at four o'clock, and if you like to be present to hear the discussion on the Law of Distress, you will only have to say if questioned, that you are introduced by me.

I am,

Yours faithfully,

WM. E. BEAR.

P.S.—Can you also reply for Mr. Blennerhassett? With reference to your proposal to address some Farmers' Club or Chamber on the subject, I think it will be better to let any proposals that are to be made emanate from the combined conference, in the first instance, because if they are put forward first as the proposal of Irish land reformers they will awaken prejudice at the onset. Pardon this suggestion. I am sure it is a prudent one, as we must make allowance for prejudice, however unreasonable.

At the same time the editor of the *Mark Lane Express* thanked me for a copy of my appeal to the Irish farmers, contained in my letter to the *Dublin Freeman's Journal* urging the Irish farmers to unite with 'the crushed agriculturists of Great Britain in order to help them to redress their injuries while we avenge our own.' The preliminary conference of the Provisional Committee of the Farmers' Alliance took place, accordingly, after the meeting of the

Farmers' Club, on the evening of April 7, 1879, and included, besides myself, the following gentlemen, who alone deserve the name of original members of the Farmers' Alliance : Messrs. Blennerhassett, M.P., Barclay, M.P., Howard, ex-M.P., Bear, Delf, and Nield. I moved Mr. Howard to the chair. My proposals were discussed and generally approved. A further meeting of a more formal character was appointed at the Westminster Palace Hotel for some days later, and I went to the Westminster Palace Hotel and hired a room, and subsequently paid for it. At the Westminster Palace meeting Messrs. Shaw, M.P. for County Cork, and O'Shaughnessy, M.P. for the city of Limerick, attended, but, as I have already explained, Mr. Shaw declined to join the organisation, which, however, was formally constituted by a resolution moved by me.

Am I bound to produce the receipt of the Westminster Palace Hotel for my hire of its rooms for the foundation meetings of the Farmers' Alliance? The matter is worth proving to the hilt. There were to be hundreds of wealthy and public-spirited Englishmen in the Alliance after it had started and after it had progressed from county to county and from cheering assembly to cheering assembly. But there was nobody but one Irish Nationalist representative to produce the modest coins required to house its opening conferences. 'Ce n'est que le premier pas qui coûte.' To pay for what has not yet succeeded is so much more extravagant than to contribute to assured success. Here, then, is the receipt of the Hotel Company for the member for Dungarvan's hire of rooms for the first farmers' meetings which were to sweep Lord Beaconsfield's Government out of the English counties at the General Election of the following year of 1880.

WESTMINSTER PALACE HOTEL COMPANY, LIMITED :
April 15, 1880.

Farmers' Meetings on April 28 and June 11, 1879.

Received of F. H. O'Donnell, Esq., M.P., the sum of Four Pounds Fourteen Shillings and Sixpence. (£4 14s. 6d.)

Signed on behalf of

THE MANAGEMENT.

The date of this receipt, which is nearly a year after the first meeting for which I paid, merely means that I came for this copy out of the hotel books a year afterwards. I paid the hire of the rooms on the occasion of the hirings.

I find from old records of these days and from private letters, that the following were the Irish members of Parliament who assisted me in the foundation of the Alliance :—

Mr. Shaw, M.P. for County Cork, Chairman of the Home Rule Party.

Colonel Colthurst, M.P. for County Cork.

Mr. Rowland P. Blennerhassett, M.P. for County Kerry.

Mr. Richard O'Shaughnessy, M.P. for Limerick City.

Mr. Patrick L. Martin, M.P. for County Kilkenny.

It may be observed that, as in the opposition of Alexander MacDonald, Joseph Cowen, and myself to the flogging clauses of the Army Bill, so here also I avoided every intimacy and co-operation of Mr. Parnell. The matter required too much discretion, too much regard for English feeling, too much reticence and too little self-advertisement, for me to entrust any part in it to a colleague who was always posing to an Irish or Transatlantic gallery, who made everything a matter of self-advertisement, and who was quite capable of denouncing and insulting the whole of our most influential English and Scotch members if he could appear thereby to organisers of declamation and dollars in New York as 'trampling again on the Saxon.' I was making use of the Farmers' Alliance for Irish purposes above all, in order to carry out a further intervention in the very centre of English domestic policy, and in order to injure the Beaconsfield party and policy which had announced themselves as irreconcilably hostile to my country. But in the first place, I did not want those objects spoiled by an incorrigible braggart—no mere braggart, but a braggart with a purpose—and in the second place, I was fairly content to help those Englishmen so long as they appeared to be friendly to Ireland. My only test and touchstone were the interests of Irish nationality. And, though it is hardly germane to the subject in hand, let me add this:

At this time of increasing aloofness from Parnell and Parnellism, I knew perfectly well, as regards the Transatlantic agitation, that 'there was money in it,' and with money the practical certainty of political influence and personal power. The calculation of getting the Irish in America to contribute to Irish politics in Ireland was common talk and common hope. I was at that time in the height of my ultra-Nationalist popularity. It was the odious time of the carriage-drawn-by-admirers, as vociferous as variable. I had but to go round Ireland uttering froth and wind. I should have done so with pleasure, if I thought that an Irish Parliament would be anywhere near the exit from the brag and babel. I knew that there was nothing in the Parnell-Davitt-Dillon procedure but froth and wind. The dollars did not count in my estimation. I suppose I must be the only prominent Irish politician of those days who can boast with absolute accuracy that he never received a red cent out of all the millions of dollars that were to inundate and ruin Irish nationhood. Before I had condemned the Land League, who could have raked in the silver more freely than

O'Donnell the audacious ?

Hardly even

Parnell the pertinacious.¹

To return to the Farmers' Alliance, it remained to devise a programme and to enrol members of influence in politics and the country. The extract from the *Annual Register* given at the opening pages of this chapter sufficiently attests, I think, that we accomplished fairly well our

¹ Rhymes from a popular doggerel of those days. I think the screed ran thus :—

While British legislation
Afflicts our Irish nation,
And no amelioration
Of that misrule is near ;
Parnell the Pertinacious,
O'Donnell the Audacious,
Will prove how efficacious
Our strategy is here.

And so forth. *Sic itur ad astra.*

business of elaborating a platform of grievances and requirements which should be extreme enough and yet not too extreme. We wanted it to be sufficiently extreme to repel the English landowners, and yet not so extreme as to repel that sluggish and cautious body, the British tenant farmers. Both in programme-making and organisation I was of some special use. In fact, I was the only member of the Business or Provisional Committee who was familiar with the handling of large masses of voters. Thanks to my training as hon. secretary in the management of the Home Rule Confederation, I had experience in the delicate art of cultivating opinion and nursing activity. As the Home Rulers were also perpetual fishermen for support in alien waters, I had learned a good many tricks of the trade in popular propaganda. Briefly to finish the remaining points, from the foundation of the Alliance at the commencement of April down to the end of June at least I was a constant guardian of my creation. I have still copies of invitations to meetings of the Business Committee down to an advanced date. Thus the notice for the meeting of the Business Committee towards the middle of June runs as follows :—

DEAR MR. O'DONNELL,

Business Committee will meet here at 3 P.M., Monday, to make arrangements for the conference and public meeting. I hope you will come.

Yours faithfully,

WILLIAM E. BEAR.

265 STRAND :

June 12, 1879.

In Ireland the new movement was followed with discreet attention, and so I have also a mass of letters and resolutions of approval and support in my undertaking from Irish agrarian reform associations, such as the Central Tenants' Association, Dublin, the County Wexford Club, the Kerry Tenants' Defence Association, stating that the tenant associations of Ireland 'were deeply indebted to me for the very able manner, &c., &c., in which I had brought the

all-important question of the land before the bar of public opinion,' &c. These Irish associations, it must not be forgotten, were composed of real farmers and practical agriculturists, who had little in common with the landless men and penniless amateurs of agitation who followed, a year later, the Jacobin banner of a purely nominal landowner with no knowledge of agriculture, and an ex-factory hand with nothing but English experience and nothing but Socialist suggestions. It has been the invariable fortune and characteristic of the Union Parliament, which thoughtfully neglects Britain in order to mismanage Ireland, that it rejects with dignity the advice of the best judges in order to capitulate disastrously to the combinations of violence and folly. Moderate reforms had been urged for Irish land by practical farmers, by great lawyers familiar with the defence of property, by keen and discerning thinkers destined to reach the highest posts under the Crown . . . outside of Ireland, the country which they knew best. Sharman Crawford, Butt, Gavan Duffy had shown the way of peace and prosperity, and found a legislature blind and deaf. Then came a mob of noisy fellows hardly knowing a potato from a turnip, and loudly proclaiming that they wanted no reforms but revolution. For them, and for them alone, were the regards of Imperial Parliament, and the pages of the Statute Book were to be filled with the echo of their crazes and their contradictions.

Safe and attractive programme-making was a useful thing, but influential members were still more important, if possible. We could hardly expect leading Conservatives; and leading Liberals were difficult to enrol, for this good reason, that Liberals in general expected little good from the counties and were not disposed to join an organisation that proposed to itself the improbable result of capturing such Tory strongholds for enemies of Toryism. Luckily, I was able to explain matters to two Liberal leaders of great and increasing influence: Mr. Cowen, M.P. for Newcastle, and Mr. Chamberlain, M.P. for Birmingham. Mr. Cowen may be set down as a lifelong friend of mine. With Mr.

Chamberlain I was never intimate, for he was the coming Robespierre of frightened Tory imaginations, and I was an ultra-Conservative Nationalist, though ready to make friends of parliamentary iniquities in all directions which promised to be useful to Ireland. As President of the Board of Trade under Mr. Gladstone, Mr. Chamberlain was to display nothing savouring of the guillotine in his manner or policy. His manners were always charming, and gentlemen who thought themselves good judges were accustomed to remark that the *sans-culottes* of Birmingham was one of the most gentlemanly men in the House, and was not that praise? I found Mr. Chamberlain quite unoppressed by a fear of failure. His intuition wanted no lengthened explanations of the important services which the Farmers' Alliance was calculated to perform. Accustomed to initiate and enjoy the efficacy of a similar organisation in Birmingham municipal affairs, he grasped at once the idea of erecting a caucus in the agricultural districts in order to excite and stimulate the expectations of the British farmer in a manner calculated to divide the formidable unity of the rural Tory vote. I believe that he hastened to give a very handsome subscription—£50—to our funds. It was arranged that the first provincial meeting of our infant association should take place at Birmingham for the benefit of the Warwickshire farmers. After Mr. Chamberlain's accession the Liberal and Radical members of the House of Commons began joining us as if by word of command, and quite in a spirit of loyal emulation. My political offspring was hardly two months old when I felt that it had secured nurses and guardians who would guarantee it a victorious and probably a prosperous existence; and I have seen since, almost with the affectionate pride of Madame Amelin in the comedy of Dancourt, how the aspiring bantling, puffed up with mundane successes, has been inclined to disown its admiring parent. 'Le joli garçon! Il est effronté comme un page.'

But though the Farmers' Alliance, as it waxed fat and prosperous, may have begun to lack a filial gratitude to its

Irish originator, there was no lack of gratitude when I brought in the adhesion of the members for Newcastle and Birmingham. Here is a short note of thanks from the Alliance secretary :—

BELMONT VILLAS:
April 23, 1879.

MY DEAR SIR,

I am glad you have got Mr. Chamberlain and Mr. Cowen to join. Our only chance of making the association a success is to get Radicals to join it. I fear English farmers generally will hold aloof, though we shall get some of the go-ahead ones. I will come to the lobby at four to-morrow (Thursday), and ask for you.

I am,

Yours faithfully,

WILLIAM E. BEAR.

P.S.—I shall not write leader till after the Conference next Monday, then I shall know better what to write.

It may be reasonably expected that the courteous and intelligent reader will understand by this time a good deal more clearly than before what was meant by that policy of 1873 which taught that 'Irish members should interfere in English affairs so long as English members interfered in Irish affairs.' Now an Irish member had founded, paid the opening expenses of, co-operated in framing the programme of, obtained the accession of the most important adherents to, and generally taken a leading share in launching, an organisation which proved to be potent in transferring the government of the Empire from Lord Beaconsfield to Mr. Gladstone after the General Election of 1880. And the Irish member who laid down that policy in 1873 and who let loose the Farmers' Alliance on the seats of Tory power in 1880 was certainly not Mr. Parnell. I shall add one interesting and amusing illustration of a further part played by the Irish in the success of the Alliance during 1879. How to make an English meeting out of a column of three hundred Irish visitors to London is the problem in hand; and to explain the following letter from the secretary of the Farmers' Alliance, it should be understood that a

large deputation of Irish farmers attended the Kilburn Agricultural Show, and that Mr. Kettle, afterwards one of the imprisoned chiefs of the Land League and signatory of the no-rent manifesto, was justly regarded at that time by the English members of the Farmers’ Alliance as able to bring a large contingent to swell the audience at the inaugural public meeting to be held on the occasion of the Kilburn Show.

THE FARMERS’ ALLIANCE,
TEMPORARY OFFICES, 265 STRAND, W.C. :
June 28, 1879.

DEAR MR. O’DONNELL,

I suppose there is no likelihood of the Irish farmers, 500, all coming to our meeting, or nearly all. If all were to come we should not have room, as I have given up the large Exeter Hall and taken only the small hall, which holds 450 people, for both our meetings. I feared a failure—a half-filled room—and preferred the chance of turning people away. If you know Mr. Kettle’s address in London I shall be obliged if you will ascertain as early as possible how many are likely to come. If necessary, I might manage even yet to have the large hall ; but as I have taken no measures to pack it, I shall not take it unless assured that at least 300 of the Irish farmers will attend.

Yours faithfully.

WILLIAM E. BEAR.

It was not so easy to induce a large body of the Irish agricultural visitors to devote their excursion to English oratory at the Alliance meeting in the evening, after the fatigues of studying the bucolic attractions of the Show all day. The billiard-marker’s holiday was said to be spent in watching a game of billiards ; but five hundred Irish farmers, assembled in the mighty metropolis, were not all to be persuaded to attend a farmers’ meeting. I believe a couple of hundred actually came to hear. The meeting seems to have been accepted by the public as a success. It was followed by a regular campaign of demonstrations throughout England and Scotland. The *Times* of 1879 and 1880 chronicles a multitude of meetings of the Farmers’ Alliance. At the General Election it returned sixty members of Parliament, and ‘the revolt of the counties’ became

the theme of Liberal exultation and Conservative indignation and regret. I was not offered a peerage for bringing the second Gladstone Government into being. Such oversight is unusual, but perhaps not unprecedented. The lines of the Roman poet, 'Sic vos non vobis,' appear to convey that the disparity of merits and rewards does not date from yesterday.

While the Farmers' Alliance was introducing a new factor of impeccable regularity, but exotic origin, into the constitutional strife of the established or traditional parties, the sordid and squalid tragedy of the Land League had been inaugurated in Ireland, and will form the matter of the ensuing chapter. A background of gloom had been everywhere visible in the foreign and colonial aspects of the Empire. Passing over the slaughter of the British Envoy to Afghanistan who had been forced upon a Mohammedan State exceptionally hostile to foreigners, and the subsequent vindication of Lord Lytton's system of theatrical provocation by means of an Anglo-Indian invasion of Afghanistan, I may mention that the outbreak of war between the British and the Zulus was bringing into close actuality that probability of the annexed Boers utilising the removal of the Zulu menace for the recovery of the Transvaal's independence, which had been not obscurely intimated in my consultations with President Kruger and Dr. Jorissen in 1877. The disaster of Isandhlana, which necessitated the complete subjugation of the Zulu kingdom and the annihilation of its formidable system of military preparation, became the antecedent of Majuba Hill. 'Lord Carnarvon's bully,' as President Kruger named to me the Zulu king, Cetewayo, could no longer bully; and the Boers felt free to direct their rifles against the white destroyers of their independence. The pride in the Vierkleur—the four-colour flag of the Transvaal Republic—will never cease to be the dominant passion of the Boers of Dingaan's Day.

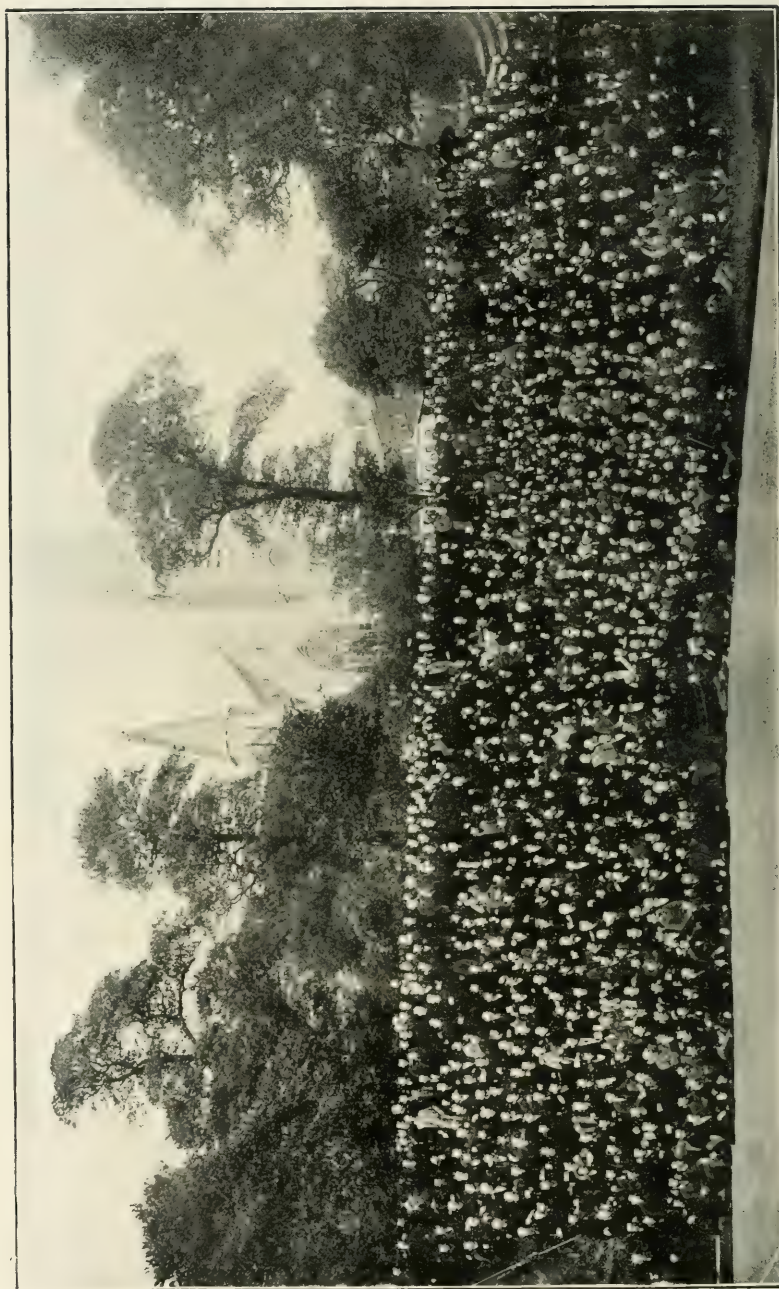


Photo: Wm. Lawrence]

MEMBERS OF FIRST LAND LEAGUE CONVENTION.

October 21, 1879.

CHAPTER XIV

THE LAND LEAGUE IN 1879 — THE AMERICAN FARMERS
KILLED IRISH AGRICULTURE—THE AMERICAN FENIANS
BLAMED THE IRISH LANDLORDS—THE WORK OF THE
DOLLARS

The Land League in 1879—An English-bred Factory-hand as Reformer of Ireland—Mr. Lowther's Unconventional Reply—Mr. Davitt on the Parnellite Coalition.

It does not appear to have struck anybody as extraordinary that the Father of the Land League, though he had been an Irish infant, was absolutely English-bred as a man, and that his sole qualification for undertaking the resettlement of the Irish land question was that he had been a mill-hand in a Lancashire factory. Any additional capacity for assuming the position of universal reformer of the Irish Land Laws can only have come to Mr. Michael Davitt while undergoing penal servitude in an English prison, in the company of English criminals, for offences connected with an attempt to raise an insurrection in England among the workmen of Irish descent who happened to reside in that country. If ever Davitt had visited Ireland at rare intervals, it was in pursuit of opportunities to sell the revolvers or other weapons entrusted to him by the Fenian organisation, and it will hardly be contended that even a fine taste in quick-firing weapons implies a competent knowledge of the requirements of agriculture of the lowliest description. It was the end of the year 1877 when Mr. Davitt, just released from nine years of imprisonment in a convict prison, was brought to visit me in my chambers at 8 Serjeants' Inn by some members of the Irish Amnesty

Association of London. Most of the Fenians released in England and passing through London were brought to visit me in Serjeants' Inn. As the chief official of the Home Rule Confederation I had always a good deal to do with the demonstrations and petitions for obtaining the release of the imprisoned Fenians, and some immense demonstrations had been arranged in Hyde Park and elsewhere by the united arrangements of the Amnesty Association and the Confederation. Worn and emaciated by the fearful usage of the convict discipline, Davitt had struck me as a sombre and intellectual enthusiast, moved by a heart of fire, and looking with a sort of dazed yearning on a world which he had almost forgotten. Within six months he was being quoted as an authority on Irish land reform. Within a year he was organising, along with Mr. John Devoy of New York, a simple scheme for obtaining the independence of Ireland by abolishing the landlords, whom he professed to regard as the only 'English garrison' which maintained the British dominion anywhere in the country. In 1879, not eighteen months from his liberation from jail, he was founding the Land League in the distressed villages of Galway and Mayo upon the broad principle, which he believed to be so simple as to carry its own justification, 'that the land belongs to the people.' Mr. John Devoy, one of the Fenian conspirators in the British regiments, appeared to have been almost as remotely connected with the knowledge of Ireland as Mr. Davitt. He had been a soldier in the French Foreign Legion and in the British cavalry. Like Davitt, while still very young, he had been shut up long years in prison. The most strenuous investigation will fail to detect any special knowledge whatever of Irish agriculture in Mr. Devoy any more than Mr. Davitt. Both these ex-prisoners professed a like antipathy to England, which was certainly genuine. Both had suffered the degrading torture of penal servitude. These were the joint authors of the Land League demands to be henceforth substituted for the platform of Home Rule which had so recently united the Irish nation! In fact, it seems never to have occurred to either of them that

they owed any deference or obedience to the educated and responsible opinion of Ireland. While professing to be merely in insurrection against the English alien, they demanded the unconditional obedience of Ireland for nostrums which had been purely excogitated out of their own reflexions in the seclusion of British jails or the peaceful repose of American citizenship. They were prepared to trample on the decisions of sixty or six hundred Home Rule members of Parliament elected under the ballot by Irish popular constituencies with the easy indifference of any Pitt or Castlereagh to the protests of the Irish House of Commons. Both were men of stainless honesty, of humane sentiments, of sympathies which often deserved the designation of chivalric. But they were quite ready to substitute their tyranny and caprice for the tyranny and caprice of the Saxon. Their boycott was as lawless as the suspension of Habeas Corpus, and infinitely more arbitrary and cruel. Both were absolutely destitute of the sense of tradition or continuity in an ancient history and society like the Irish: Davitt being a mere Lancashire Radical compounded of Chartism and the French Revolution; while Devoy was prepared to new-model Ireland like a mushroom territory of Oklahoma, with provisions for the Irish landlords considered as Red Indians under confiscation by the genial Constitution of the United States. Both Davitt and Devoy possessed the prestige of suffering, enhanced by the appearance of power derived from temporary or permanent influence in the quasi-military organisations of the Fenian Brotherhoods. The crudeness of Davitt's British Radicalism shortly alienated the consistent advocates of armed insurrection. Mr. John Devoy remained a trusted chief of the bellicose multitudes, which include scores of thousands of the best material for soldiers in either hemisphere; but as the swim is considerable from Battery Point to Bantry Bay, even the redoubtable parades of the gallant Sixty-Ninth, the crack Irish regiment of New York, have never progressed beyond a picnic at Coney Island; while the post-prandial fire-eating of the Friendly Sons

of St. Patrick will never detract from the gastronomic fame of the most brilliant and convivial association of American diners-out.

Land Leaguers of infinitely lower quality were O'Donovan Rossa and Patrick Ford ; with a strain of something like insanity in the former, probably due to the awful experiences of his penal servitude ; and with a peculiar and revolting baseness and savagery, mingled with blasphemous impiety, in the latter. O'Donovan Rossa's mad unscrupulousness would disgrace any cause ; but I am compelled to temper loathing with commiseration when I remember the frank and gallant young Munster Irishman who stood before Judge Keogh in the Dublin court-house to receive the awful sentence of penal servitude for life as a common convict for having been the bookkeeper in the *Irish People*, the organ of the Fenian party in 1865. O'Donovan Rossa had struck no blow in civil war. He had never injured public or private property. He had conspired to free his native land from a misgovernment which no Englishman to-day denies and which few Englishmen extenuate. He was sent for life to the living hell of England's vilest of the vile, he, a pure, generous, and unselfish political enthusiast. Men still speak of the reckless merriment of his despairing defence. Exercising his right to lay before the jury the matters charged against him, he selected from the files of the Fenian organ the fiercest indictments of foreign rule, the spiciest satire on patriots turned place-hunters, the boldest portraits of prominent officials, including the presiding judge, who had been an extreme patriot once upon a time. In jail he refused to wash convict cells, to carry and empty prison ordure buckets, to fulfil the hideous round of penal indignities contrived to brand a criminal's soul with the felon taint for ever. He was punished with merciless rigour, which he bore with dogged defiance. When he was released after many years, the easy, jovial South Irelander was changed to a creature of ferocious hatred of the English name. Who can wonder ? If you treat a Garibaldi as a Bill Sykes, do you not deserve the

worst reward for the worst atrocity? The best that can be said for Patrick Ford is that he was infuriated by the punishments heaped upon the political prisoners, many of them Irish-American soldiers; and that, like all Irish-Americans, he had grown up among the living and vivid memories of the Black Famine, when a million and a half of Irish men, women, and children, of the race which had won a hundred battles for England, perished of slow starvation caused by preventible and official denial of food within half a day's journey of the Bank of England. But that does not alter the fact that Ford became the apostle of skirmishing, and that Ford's dollars, for that unhallowed programme, formed the sustentation fund of the Land League, its organisers, its members of Parliament, its uncrowned king. If the evils of landlordism could be remedied by such devilries as these, then, indeed, was Beelzebub to be expelled by Beelzebub. The Land League was declared to be, ultimately at all events, directed against England. It was certainly advisable to insist as loudly as possible upon that destination, because its immediate object of attack appeared to be nearly everything which Irishmen were accustomed to regard as essentially Irish of the Irish. Relying on the American money, a whole swarm of persons of no importance now appeared as persons of the utmost importance. In an agitation professedly engaged in the improvement of the agrarian condition, it was curious to observe how the stimulus and the direction came from agitators quite unconnected with agrarian life and livelihoods. An amusing incident in the House of Commons at an early stage of the new unsettlement, which caused immense indignation in the ranks of Parnellism, was curiously typical of the politico-social transformation. Interrogated about a certain meeting in the west of Ireland, described by the questioner as a 'farmers' meeting of the County Galway,' Mr. Lowther,

the Chief Secretary, replied with painstaking accuracy but defective conciliation :—

The hon. member is in error in speaking of the meeting as one of Galway farmers. It was not. The chief speakers had no connexion with Galway. Nor were they farmers. One resolution was moved by a clerk in a commercial house in Dublin. Another was proposed by a discharged schoolmaster from a distance. A third had for its mover a gentleman who, besides being a stranger to Galway, was a convict at large on a ticket-of-leave. I fail to recognise these persons as County Galway farmers.

Then the protests began, and Mr. Lowther, with his usual cheerfulness, listened to some of the warmest comments he had heard in the course of his official experience. If his tact had not been conspicuous, his careful analysis was unquestionable. This was to be the feature of the new unsettlement. It was the carnival of the unemployables and undesirables. Clerks on apparently permanent leave of absence, newspaper reporters with a scanty newspaper income, law students not remarkable for the study of law, schoolmasters without pupils, barristers without clients, an occasional farmer who had preferred the platform to the furrow, brewers' travellers, village pluralists who united the pursuit of grocery sales with usurious loans, small publicans with views still more fiery than their alcoholic wares, itinerant professors of uneconomic professions ; such were the men who represented the Land League stake in the country. An organiser's salary of £3 a week was to most of them wealth beyond the dreams of avarice. It was the dollar, and nothing but the dollar, which made the mare go. In a rural district the warmest oratory of the apostles had failed to excite the apathy of peasants who had no cause to feel badly off. It was impossible to found a branch, or to find members for the branch. Suddenly one morning an enthusiastic runner charged down the little street. 'Glory to God !' he shouted. 'The Dublin Land League has sent five pounds to Paddy Casey.' 'Why, why, why ?' 'Faix, because he's turned Land Leaguer.'

That day the branch became a popular institution rooted like the Rock of Cashel. The judicious distribution of £150,000 a year in all the likeliest spots of Ireland worked wonderfully to prepare popular belief in the new dogma that 'the land belonged to the people, and that Parnell would make the Government put the tenants in the place of the landlords.' Ireland, according to Mr. Davitt, was on the point of becoming that land of nursery stories where currant buns were to be had for nothing in all the cake-shops, and the roast sucking-pigs ran about the streets, with knife and fork stuck in their crackling, inviting the passers-by, 'Who'll eat me? Who'll eat me?' But really, was this prospective Elysium of parliamentary manufacture precisely calculated to detach the Irish mob from dependence on the alien Parliament? Mr. Devoy soon began to be not quite so sure that he had gone the right way to expel 'England's garrison.' What if another garrison of peasants craving for rent reductions from Government commissioners, of small proprietors content to pay instalments of purchase for eighty years to the British Treasury, were to take the place of the few thousand Irish squires who had been driven out of the country? One of the first things the Russians did in Poland was to favour the peasants against the nobles. How did that help the total expulsion of Russia from Poland? Mr. John Devoy, who is a genuine devotee of Irish Independence, like many less insurgent persons, soon began to doubt the patriotism of the Land League; and at the present day he remains quite convinced that the United Irish League, like the Land League at its worst, is an incorrigible engine of unnational demoralisation. He might have reflected a little earlier that the British Government, which had got all the loyal service it wanted from the Irish gentry in return for excluding them from legislating for their own country—a somewhat curious title to gratitude—was quite capable of throwing the gentry to the dogs or the tenants in the expectation of securing the more valuable votes of the latter. It was all very well for Mr. Davitt, who was mainly

a Lancashire Socialist-Radical under his Hibernian varnish, or Mr. Parnell, who amiably wanted to be always the Vicar of Bray; it was all very well for these adaptable opportunists to consent to Ireland being made a British Government-Land-Department-and-Rent-Office. But for a soldier of Washington and Emmet the awakening was tardy, to say the least. The whole of the Clann-na-Gael were entitled to inquire if the Manchester Three had only died in order that 500,000 Irish tenants should pay purchase-rent for eighty years to the enemy? Mr. Devoy had decidedly better have accepted National Home Rule in preference to this culmination of dependence and unification.

In a letter which Mr. Davitt wrote to me in 1884, there is an ingenuous admission of the extent of the mutual deception upon which Land Leaguism or Parnellism—the thing was the same according as you viewed the structure or the figure-head—was based or kept up . . . until it came toppling down. In 1884 I had quitted the so-called Home Rule party in the House of Commons since a year previously, and I had lately published a letter exposing the absolute imposture of a combination which posed as ultra-Nationalist for the Irish-American gallery and only sought a quiet life at Westminster. In those days, also, Mr. Parnell's absences in the neighbourhood of Captain O'Shea's rural retreat at Eltham were completing the disrepute and embarrassment of his faithful and enduring followers, not yet endowed with the Maynooth-cum-Hawarden courage required to affix them permanently to the Liberal party. My letter was widely read, and obtained notices of various kinds, from Mr. Davitt among others. 'Your letter,' he wrote, 'has created a flutter in the parliamentary dovecote. It will be certain to be noticed by the Irish-American press. People will agree with mostly all you say and condemn you for having said it.' Davitt's explanation of the dislike for facts in this instance is piquant and illuminating. 'You seem to overlook the fact that *all* sections of Nationalists have taken stock in Parnellism, and an admission of the failure of *that*—whatever it means—comes as a reproach

to nearly everybody who has been concerned in the national movement for years. People do not like to admit that they have been taken in so hugely, or that so little has been done for all the sacrifices made during the last four years.’ This candid testimony of the Father of the Land League to the net value of what had resulted from so much unsettlement, misery, and shame deserves to be kept in mind, especially as fresh efforts are being made at the present moment to bowdlerise the avowals of the disenchanted Hammer of Feudalism, or what he called feudalism. Davitt meant by feudalism, in the first place, a term of ignorant abuse which could be flung at all property in land; and secondly, a name for the evils of eviction at will or arbitrary eviction, which were the crowning villainy of bad landlords and the crowning fear of good tenants. Davitt would have been shocked to know that under feudalism the tenant, so far from being liable to eviction so long as he paid his due, was rather hampered by the difficulty of ever getting out of his holding at all. Feudalism or no feudalism, Parnellism was worse than a failure. It was a huge take-in, which hit so sorely ‘ *all* sections of Nationalists ’ that, in order to avoid being posted as fools, they would probably continue for some time longer to call Parnellism a miracle of intelligence and honesty. This revelation of the internal condition of an association of discordant and incompatible elements in a common make-believe, or ‘ long firm,’—to use an appreciative metaphor of Mr. Chamberlain in reference to the Tory party—will help to explain the completeness of the disintegration of Mr. Parnell’s authority and following when struck by the excommunications of Mr. Gladstone and the bishops only half a dozen years later. But it also illustrates the incredible superficiality and frivolity with which the agitators in Irish America also had accepted a blind faith in the Parnell delusion. They had really less excuse for closing their eyes than the Dublin Tammany. The Dublin Tammany at least lied its hardest to obtain the dollars. The credulous persons beyond the Atlantic were paying out the dollars.

Upon the subject of Irish America Davitt was equally explicit. The man who went to recommend Parnellism to the Clann-na-Gael in 1878, who combined with Mr. John Devoy in Ireland in 1879 to make the insolvent Squire of Avondale the chief of the new agrarianism, must have had unequalled opportunities for realising both the height of the Irish-American expectations and the depth of their disillusion.

The Americans,' wrote Davitt to me in 1884, 'feel terribly sold—but the admission that Parnellism is a failure would be the utter destruction of what is left of the Land League movement in the United States.' It was a curious and a sordid game of mystification and mendacity all round. The campaign against their neighbours' goods had certainly not tended to elevate the general integrity of the manipulators of the Land League. But there was something not much less painful and far more droll. Within a few months of this time, both Lord Carnarvon on behalf of Conservatives, and a score of influential persons on behalf of the Gladstonian Liberals, were gravely to sound the intentions, or to arrange the alliance, of the discredited chief, who was only protected from open repudiation by the reluctance of his nominal followers to proclaim themselves the reverse of intelligent or far-seeing persons! The statesmanship of the United Kingdom continues to present such little surprises. In Ireland it evidently remains to erect a statue to Davitt in contiguity to the statue to Parnell under the lee of the monument of the arch-agitator, and, if possible, to have both memorials inaugurated on the same day and at the same meeting, with Mr. John Redmond or Mr. John Dillon paying the same tribute of common admiration to the great Land Leaguers who had so much admiration for each other and so much confidence in the work which each of them had accomplished.

After this introductory commemoration of the nature and value of the Land League movement, it remains briefly to summarise the leading phases of its origin and maturity. This is an advantage of history over action, that it enables

us to take that glance in advance at results which facilitates our judgment of the antecedent conditions of those results. It will be seen at later pages of the narrative that it was Gladstone's concession of a sort of Home Rule in 1886, only two years after these revelations by Mr. Davitt, which saved Mr. Parnell from repudiation by his followers four years earlier than the great revolt of 1890 ; just as it will also be shown that it was Mr. Forster's suppression of the Land League in 1881 which saved its uncrowned king from being repudiated by his disenchanted subjects five years earlier still. It would not be difficult to show that it was the blunders of the British Government which created the very possibility of the Parnell legend altogether. I am not writing this history, nor am I criticising events or persons, from the point of view of any English interests. English interests are interesting and deserve consideration in their proper place. Here I am thinking of Irish interests alone, and when I say that such an act is injurious, or such a person is impolitic, or the reverse, I refer to utility and policy for the benefit of Ireland and the Irish nation. Furthermore, I can condemn a man's policy and action, or the reverse, without implying either condemnation of the man's principles and intentions or the reverse. Most of the worst enemies of Ireland are men adorned with all the virtues which should make for private reputation and domestic felicity. I should not choose a commander because he was a modest philanthropist, nor cashier him, if he were valuable as a commander, even though he were almost as amorous as King Charles II or King Louis XIV.

To take the Land League in order of causation and time, I regard Mr. John Devoy as Father of the Land League in both respects, and Mr. Davitt as his leading lieutenant at the outset of the institution. Mr. Devoy's letter to the *Freeman's Journal* on December 11, 1878, contained in general and in detail everything which was essential to the programme of the Land League. Coming a few months after the conference between Dr. Carroll and Mr. John O'Leary as representing the Fenian organisation, and Mr.

Parnell and myself as representing the active policy in the Home Rule party, at which I had urged that the Nationalists of all shades should give a fair trial to Home Rule, including connexion with the British Empire and an Irish Parliament, it was clear to me that my programme had not been accepted by the Fenian authorities. Mr. Devoy's letter made the reason plain. The whole of the Home Rule programme was rejected and the agrarian question was to occupy the foremost place. Nay more, the Devoy letter constituted a programme of civil strife and renewed division in Ireland itself. By insisting that the declared object of any common organisation which the American Fenians would support must be merely an undefined, purposely undefined, 'self-government,' to be hereafter defined by an Irish National Assembly which would, if possible, pronounce for absolute independence, the Devoy New Departure simply resolved itself into very old John-Mitchellism or Wolfe-Toneism, driving out of the combination all Nationalists who accepted a Grattan Parliament, all Nationalists who accepted the Butt Federalism, and, beyond all hope of conciliation, the whole of the Conservative and Protestant population of Ireland. As the Home Rule Constitution of Mr. Butt had been accepted by free national conventions of a most representative character, and ratified by the overwhelming majority of a ballot vote of the Irish electorate, still unadulterated by the ultra-ignorant mass introduced by the Electoral Act of 1885, the Devoy proposal was really flat insurrection against Irish self-government. Ireland's emigrant children were to dictate to Ireland herself. The Devoy proposal was at the same time a rejection of the inherited right of Ireland, which recognised the Grattan Parliament as unaffected by any forcible suppression; and the Grattan Parliament was the King, Lords, and Commons of Ireland. An Oklahoma Constitution of some mushroom legislature elected by some mushroom electorate—without a tradition or a history—was the essence of the Devoy proposal. Then came the precise ground and fundamental principle of the Land League: the

Irish population only cared for nationality if nationality meant the extirpation of the landlords. Mr. Devoy, like his disciple Mr. Davitt, agreed that for nationhood in itself, in its independent legislation, in its union of compatriots, the Irish population did not care a jot! In Mr. Devoy's own words, 'No party or combination of parties in Ireland can ever hope to win the support of a majority of the people except it honestly proposes a radical reform of the land system.' That is to say, a Land League must obtain from the Union Parliament, by various arguments, the abolition of existing ownerships of land and the introduction of a peasant proprietary. If Mr. Devoy, like Mr. Davitt, was ready to acknowledge the British Parliament's right to legislate for Ireland on the great and important question of the land, then clearly the British Parliament was at least equally entitled to legislate for Ireland on the ten thousand minor matters of everyday wants and amendments. Mr. Devoy, like Mr. Davitt, had turned champion and pillar of the Act of Union. I am not surprised that Mr. Devoy failed to carry the best of the National Fenians with him for such a surrender of the historical position, nor am I surprised that within a very few years Mr. Devoy had lost all enthusiasm for the sort of Frankenstein monstrosity which he had mistaken for Irish Nationalism.

Mr. Devoy not only proposed, in the *Freeman's Journal* of December 11, 1878, the very scheme afterwards adopted by Mr. Davitt and the Land League, but we know also from Mr. Davitt himself, as a witness before the Parnell Commission, that 'in the autumn of 1879, when my funds were getting rather low . . . I got a letter from, I think, Patrick Ford, saying that the trustees of what had been known as the Skirmishing Fund had resolved to send me a sum of money in order that I might carry on this work of agitation. . . . Following the receipt of this letter from Patrick Ford came one from John Devoy, with I think £200, and then there was a subsequent sum of £208 sent to me, altogether £408, I think.' There is the first Irish-American subvention of the Land League sent by Mr. John Devoy to

Mr. Michael Davitt. I have never heard, and I would be slow to believe, that the Skirmishing Fund in Mr. Devoy's intention ever was what it meant in Patrick Ford's intention. But I can heartily endorse the language of the famous Fenian chief, Mr. James Stephens, quoted by Sir Henry James before the Parnell Commission: 'I have no patience with that Skirmishing Fund; it is at once the wildest, lowest, and most wicked conception of the national movement.' We, who know what hideous assassinations and massacres have stained emancipating movements in Russia, Turkey, Italy, and elsewhere, do not need to be warned against attributing to the general body of any reformers the fanatical abominations of a small minority of desperadoes. When I visited the old Fenian chief, James Stephens, in his cottage at Howth in his peaceful age, there was no subject on which the old man was so hotly earnest as on the repudiation of all complicity of the old Fenians in any acts of intended hostility to England which were not acts of legitimate and honourable war. Compared with the rank and file of Irish Nationalism in America, the advocates of inhuman outrages were probably as few as the kindred association of the Invincibles in the masses of the Land Leaguers in Ireland. But when secret conspiracy takes the place of courage and prudence, there are always off-shoots of evil from the poisonous plant of skulking mystery. Mr. Devoy was the founder, advocate, and first paymaster of the Land League in Ireland.

It may be remembered that Mr. Parnell, who was a first-class parrot, said early in his speeches for the Land League, 'that he would never have taken off his coat for land reform if he did not see Home Rule behind it.' But this is only Devoy in his initial programme of December 1878 declaring that 'the recovery of national independence was the object,' and that 'a radical reform of the land system' was only the bait for bringing the majority of the people into the movement for self-government. Of course, this was also the funny logic of Davitt's policy. Destroy the landlords, exasperate all the social elements of the Irish

population which are bound up with the ownership of landed estate, and you will get self-government as a necessary consequence! Of course, too, such a brilliant idea captivated Mr. John Dillon. At the foundation meeting of the American Land League, Mr. Dillon exclaimed with a childlike faith: 'At last we have got a movement in Ireland that must succeed and overthrow the first garrison of an alien and hostile Government.' After quarter of a century of this sort of overthrowing of an alien and hostile Government Mr. John Dillon is still a member of Parliament in the British House of Commons, and is reported to be on the most friendly terms with the Right Hon. Mr. Birrell, Chief Secretary for Ireland in the 'alien and hostile Government'! Mr. Birrell and Mr. Asquith—who is also reported to be a shrewd judge of a political situation—appear to be so little afraid of the consequences of the loss to England of her landlord garrison, that they recently brought in a Bill for compulsorily accelerating the exit from Ireland of the ancient owners of land. Curious to find Mr. Devoy, Mr. Asquith, Mr. Parnell, and Mr. Birrell, all approving, for such different reasons and expectations, the same policy of making a happy dispatch of Irish landlordism. Really, the abolition of the resident proprietors does not seem to be so exactly tantamount to the end of alien rule as the fathers and mothers of the Land League profess to have expected. At all events, the emigration returns, since Messrs. Devoy, Davitt, and Parnell undertook their benevolent enterprise, appear to show that for every expatriated landlord, at least a hundred of the finest peasantry, who used to cheer the Land League Machiavellis, have disappeared from the face of Ireland. Perhaps it will yet be discovered that the Home Rule policy of Isaac Butt, which sought to range the King Harmons and the Colthursts and O'Connor Dons on the side of the nation, would have been a good deal better for Ireland, as well as incomparably more neighbourly and honourable.

Of course, it was all the merest twaddle and drivel, this incendiary rubbish about driving the owners of landed

estate out of Ireland in order to allow Irish independence to enter in. What could only enter in was a British Government department receiving purchase - rents for generations to come, exercising more than a residential owner's inquisition and supervision, distributing a patronage infinitely more demoralising and denationalising than the favours of any estate agency, claiming an additional right of British interference in Irish affairs on the ground of the interests of the British taxpayers involved in the investments of British credit in Irish land purchase. Quarter of a century after Messrs. Devoy and Davitt saw that beautiful vision of English rule departing from the country behind the ruined landowners, Mr. Birrell was able to say in the laughing House of Commons, as an indication of the increased independence of Irish character produced by Land Leagues and estate purchases, that 'Everybody in Ireland wanted to be either a land sub-commissioner or a stipendiary magistrate.' The members from Ireland—this is decidedly a more accurate designation than the Irish members—smiled genially with the rest of their British fellow-subjects. When the *Freeman's Journal*, the recognised organ of the League party, is also a recognised stepping-stone to the minor judicial bench, why boggle at profitable place-hunting in any department? From the highest aristocracy of the League Directory to the humblest electors of the members from Ireland, almost the first utterance of infant lips is 'A situation!' Down in County Waterford, honoured with the constituency which returns the chairman of the party, it is said that at the birth of a manchild in peasant circles, the good wives cry admiringly: 'God bless the fine boy! Sure it's a grand post-office sorter he'll make, when he grows up.'

I have called Parnell a first-class parrot, in connexion with his iteration and reiteration of the Devoyan and Davittite catch-phrases about seeing self-government behind land unsettlement. This is exactly what he was in the matter, with this distinction. The imitative bird from the Amazon or the Congo repeats without

overmuch comprehension of the human phrases. Parnell repeated with the most thorough comprehension of the bottomless inanity of the borrowed balderdash. He knew that in his political pedlar's stock the razors were made, not to shave, but to sell. The phrase represented the acumen of his paymasters, and he used it. It was one rendering of that short guide to success: 'As I am leader, I am follower.' He and I were still intimates, if not attached friends, which we never had been. But the habits of those past years in Keppel Street lodgings and Serjeants' Inn chambers had not disappeared. He could be frankly cynical in presence of the comrade whom he never deceived. 'But you know, Parnell, that abolishing the landlords does not abolish the English?' 'Our beloved countrymen say that they think it will.' He never concealed his amiable suspicion that some of his estimable countrymen said that they believed what seemed to suit the game that was on hand. Always the reverse of an enthusiast, Parnell became more profoundly sceptical the more he lived with his new dependants, who were dependants, because he lent them prestige. Men have since anathematised his egotism. Egotism was the almost inevitable lesson of all that dollar-hunting fustian and all that self-interested rant. He was not the last to know what stupendous fees the Land League lawyers were fobbing on their briefs for the defence of Captain Moonlight & Company. He was not the last to recognise the generous instinct in that rural joy-shout: 'Glory to God! The Dublin Land League has sent five pounds to Paddy Casey!' Of course, men who succumb to temptation have some antecedent disposition which facilitates the fall; but when Parnell fell to the Land League, there was the stuff of a brave captain and a gallant gentleman lost to Ireland. The £40,000 which the Parnell subscription brought him, the £5000 which the *Times* paid him in compensation for libel, were found at his death to have disappeared with a thoroughness which suggests that he did not doubt his capacity to obtain further gains, when needed. All that was

not very heroic. Who was heroic in his vicinity? There was money in the Land League for all the evictors of estate owners. Which of them refused to draw his salary of £400? Which of them refused to send round the collecting-hat if the branches could be persuaded that the collector deserved a collection? Men whose clerkly wage had been 30s. a week acknowledged that the 'Irish Press Agency' was a better billet. A man who stood before me in 1879, where I was chairman of a meeting, asking permission to deliver a supplementary oration after the normal end of the proceedings—a man in napless hat, outworn overcoat, and frayed trousers—had been presented within four years afterwards with a testimonial of £8000. When Parnell smilingly opined that the labourer was worthy of his hire, he did not forget that he had hired his labourers on very satisfactory terms for them as well as himself, and the recollection did not soften the passionate scorn with which he turned on 'the gutter-sparrows' who had turned on him. I admit that 'the gutter-sparrows' had their story also to tell. But when you begin with robbing your neighbour in the name of patriotism, you need not be surprised to find that the dollars which came from the father of dynamite failed to elevate the followers of the Father of the Land League. Ugh!

I condemn, I abhor all this odious matter. It is easy to be disdainful of ignorance and violence. But the Irish ought not to have been ignorant. They were an intellectual race among the most intellectual. Perhaps not a single one of the vituperative and windy orators who ranted, and were paid for it, between the Hill of Howth and Achill Island, but might have won the attention of cultivated audiences, if they had been cultivated in any just proportion to their natural gifts. But the British Government had created, maintained, and necessitated the ignorance of Ireland. From the primary schools, where the schoolmaster's first duty was to be a sub-sacristan, to the secondary schools which hardly deserved to be classed as primary, and the university whose lecture-rooms, bare of endowments for poor students,

only mocked the desire of knowledge as the cakes and buns of the confectioner's window mock the starving children who fasten their hungry eyes on the unapproachable dainties; from the rotten foundation to the inaccessible summit of the educational fabric in Ireland, the British Government, which had usurped the responsibilities without discharging the duties of native legislation, established and disseminated nothing but ignorance and degradation. As I have mentioned in a note to a preceding page, the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge alone distribute yearly seventy thousand pounds sterling in scholarships to students in wealthy England. In robbed and impoverished Ireland, the Queen's University and Colleges, established by magnificent England as the one university open to the Irish commonalty for the whole of the island, there were less than two thousand pounds sterling annually distributable in scholarships to students. Fifteen hundred English students receive scholarships annually in Oxford and Cambridge alone. For the whole of Ireland there were only scholarships for a hundred students in the Queen's Colleges. One hundred students in a population of eight millions when the colleges were founded, of six millions a generation later! Generous England, stepmother of Irish intelligence! Even those hundred scholarships were rarely attainable, as there were few schools in the country fit to prepare for a university examination. The deadweight of ignorance rested on every manifestation of the national life, on the formation of political thought as on the preparation for the professions.

Monotonous, hypermonotonous, was the rabid ignorance of the rabid oratory of the Land League orators.

The landlords are the English garrison. The landlords hold the land which belongs to the people. When you drive the landlords out of Ireland you will drive Dublin Castle too. When you drive the landlords out of Ireland you will have your farms as your own property, as you ought to have, for God made the land for the people. The landlords tried to evict the people of Ireland. Let the people evict the landlords now, and the

people will evict at the same time the English garrison. The landlords are the English garrison. The landlords hold the people's land. The landlords, who are England's garrison, demand rent from the people for the land which God gave to the people.

There was the unchanging stuff of a thousand speeches. It was all as luminous as bog-mist and as clear as mud. On November 1, 1879, a long rigmarole from America appeared in the *Freeman's Journal*, purporting to be an address to the American Irish, apparently urging them to help to organise a peasant revolt or *jacquerie* in Ireland, and signed, to my huge disgust, by Carroll, who had conferred with Parnell and me the year before in the Surrey Hotel off the Strand. It spoke of bringing matters to the pitch of wholesale evictions, and gloated over the prospect of 'wholesale evictions at the bayonet's point being sure to end in bloodshed, and men preferring to die like men defending their homes from the foreign robbers rather than live as paupers in the workhouse or starve by the roadside.' It urged the Irish Americans to be ready 'to help the people to stand by their homes and to strike down the robber rule of the landlord.' I was concerned to see that Devoy's name was also appended to the frantic thing, for it was widely known that Devoy was busy in the Land League. Some old friends of mine, working men in London, attached to the Home Rule Confederation, told me that it was creating a desperate spirit, and that people were saying that the American Fenians would revenge every eviction. Lysaght Finnegan, now M.P. for Ennis, agreed with me that it was worse than criminal lunacy to pour such incendiary rubbish as that into the ears of the excitable people; but he suggested that it was only bluff meant to frighten the British Government and not to incite the Irish to anything reckless or dangerous. Mr. Finnegan wrote to Parnell, and told me that Parnell's answer was that the Irish in America were always thinking of the way the people were driven to die on the roadside in the Black Famine of 1846 and 1847. 'I met plenty of Irish men and women in America,' said Parnell,

‘who had lived through the famine, and who had seen the roadsides filled with the men, women, and children starved to death.’ Parnell’s words confirmed what I had seen and heard myself among Irish from America, who were simply ungovernable with sorrow and hate for England’s action and inaction when the potato failed, and when the corn which did not fail was exported, and when the Government refused food to any Irish family who occupied a holding of more than quarter of an acre. This knowledge of the immense sorrow and vengeance in the hearts of hundreds of thousands of living Irishmen and Irishwomen in America always made me fear that a race which had suffered so terribly might seize any method of revenge. It redoubled my anxiety, while it explained, and almost justified, the bitterest hatred, and certainly justified a settled and unbending resentment and hostility. I wanted Parnell to impress upon his American correspondents that they might injure the tenantry much more than the landlords. Lysaght Finnegan, who had seen a good deal of powder burned in real war, was full of disapprobation against the incitement of unarmed villagers to attempt a *jacquerie*, besides knowing that the irregular warfare of mere peasants always degenerates into indiscriminate massacre, which calls down the horror of civilisation upon the justest cause. I never could learn any trace of Parnell having tried to moderate the violent language of anybody. The gallery he was playing to was the gallery of the Skirmishing Fund, though I knew very little about the Skirmishing Fund till long afterwards. I was very busy with foreign leader-writing, wrote for half a dozen papers, and made £1400 by my pen this year. I felt that Home Rule was being wrecked, and I was already drifting out of Irish local complications, which seemed to lose in patriotism as they increased in virulence. Dollars, though still comparatively few, were said to be arriving; and every man seemed to dream of a silver flood and a vast agitation. My unbending fidelity to the Home Rule programme of 1873 and my refusal to alter its terms were already raising

a wall between me and Parnellism, root and branch. I was warned that, though I was an advanced tenant righter, I was held to be a reactionary by the newcomers, and that Parnell had formally repudiated Home Rule and adopted the Devoy-Davitt new departure before the formal foundation of the Land League on October 21, 1879. This was the final stab in the back to Home Rule.

What made the new agitation both absurd and malicious was the all-important fact that it was not Irish landlordism which had anything to do with the distress in the west of Ireland; because, in the first place, agricultural distress was general in England also, and secondly, because, even under the Congested Districts Board, the west of Ireland is always on the verge, or over the verge, of pauperism and destitution. 'Why do not the landlords of the good lands in the centre of Ireland grant settlements to the superfluous population of the overcrowded west?' This fallacy is dead. We now know that the inhabitants of 'the good lands in the centre of Ireland' would crack the skulls of any would-be migrants from the overcrowded west who dared to occupy lands coveted by local patriotism and cupidity. The Congested Districts Board even to-day, after Tenant Right Acts and Peasant Proprietary Acts by all shades and sizes of British administrators—by Gladstones, and Morleys, and Balfours, and Wyndhams, and Birrells—even the Congested Districts Board knows to-day, in spite of its command of Government endowments, that the western tenantry are a difficult class to ameliorate. They will not move, and they cannot be moved, and there is nowhere to move them to. As the area covered by the operations of the Congested Districts Board covers the very counties which were the stronghold of the Land League agitation and outrages, it is worth while to ask the Board what it has been able to do to prevent depopulation and promote prosperous industry. In the first place, has the Board stopped depopulation? Alas, the official statistics show that since the Board was set up in 1893 no less than 400,000 people have disappeared from the counties under its charge,

although it is managed, not by landlords, but by the most popular ecclesiastics in the west! To come to details, between 1891 and 1901 Donegal lost 12,000 inhabitants; Sligo, 14,000; Kerry, 14,000; Mayo, 19,000; Galway, 23,000! Messrs. Davitt, Dillon, Parnell, and Company had stormed through the west in 1879 and 1880, accusing the evicting landlords of driving the population out of the country. How was it that all the loving care and the large endowments and official patronage of the Congested Districts Board have seen the same depopulation continued, perhaps with accelerated force? The landlords killed industry? Lord Dudley, the sympathetic chairman of the Congested Districts Commission, had to declare that 'the Congested Districts Board has tried for twenty years to develop new industries, and has failed.' The present Lord MacDonnell added that 'the Board, having been working for fourteen or fifteen years, has only touched the fringe' of the whole question of distress in the west. One fundamental reason of the distress in the west has been that the whole population, from the peasants in the poorest cabins to the fairly well-to-do farmers, have been kept as ignorant as carps—ignorant of education, ignorant of agriculture, ignorant of housekeeping, ignorant of almost everything which has raised the tribe to a city or nation. In this way the west has lost up to the present day fully half a million of men and women since Messrs. Devoy and Davitt swore by their greatest gods that the Land League would stop depopulation. The fact of the matter was that the peasantry in the west knew very well that it was the bad season—the same bad season which was ruining farmers in England and Scotland—that had injured and destroyed their scanty and ill-grown harvests; and they had not the slightest animosity against any landlords until the Land League bribed, and lied, and terrorised them into a violent parody of spontaneous indignation. The local leader, Mr. Matthew Harris, living in the midst of the worst districts, at Ballinasloe in County Galway, had to admit before the Parnell Commission that the peasantry had no spontaneous hatreds towards the

other classes of society at all ; but had to be goaded and excited into the semblance of ferocious sentiments, and, of course, into the reality of ferocious sentiments, after outrage and passion, crime and repression, had let loose the demons of the pit over the waters of Lough Mask and in the sleeping cabins of Maamtrasna. ' Our peasantry in Ireland, my lord—the farming classes—were in a very dormant, low, enslaved condition,' deposed Mr. Harris, ' and if we had not worked with great energy and appealed to every feeling and every sentiment that would rouse them up, we could never have brought the Land League beyond the point to which Mr. Butt had brought his old drag-along movement.' The American dollars, reinforced by the death's-head epistles of Captain Moonlight, were required to arouse the western peasantry to the iniquity of rents and the perfection of prairie value.

It is unnecessary to say or recapitulate much about the contemporary distress in England and Scotland. Messrs. Davitt, Dillon, and Parnell did not think it necessary to inform their west of Ireland audiences that the distress, which was the exclusive product of Irish landlordism, was wasting hopes and ruining harvest from Land's End to the Scots Highlands. How could I have managed my easy success of my Farmers' Alliance if the farmers of Britain were not at an extremity of loss and alarm ? Small men were going to the wall all over England. Labour was being dismissed by penniless employers. The towns were overcrowded with country labourers seeking a livelihood at the roughest of town occupations. In the course of the debate on a motion for a Royal Commission on Agriculture made by Mr. Chaplin, the most serious statements were made on all sides of the House, both as to the effects of the badness of the season and as to the effects of foreign competition, especially American competition in grain and meat, upon the possibility of profits from farming in Britain. The same pressure of American competition in corn, flour, and meat was felt with increasing force throughout Ireland. Within my own knowledge every mill of the numerous corn-mills

in the town of Galway has been closed by the American flour, and you can see the gaunt and melancholy skeletons of the great buildings which, forty years ago, were hives of prosperous industry. It used to be a splendid sight to see, on Wednesdays and Saturdays, the long lines of country carts, laden with corn, and accompanied by splendid specimens of men, which brought the produce of neighbouring farms to be ground to flour in the busy mills of Galway. If Mr. Devoy, instead of sending American dollars for a ruinous revolution, had simply stopped the exportation of American flour and corn, he would have ended the loss on Irish agriculture from one end of the island to the other. The Americans were killing Irish tillage, and the Irish were told to shoot their landlords as a consequence.

The simple fact was that the Land League conspirators wanted a revolution, and did not even disguise the complete absence of a plausible pretext. Mr. Parnell himself, who went to America for money at the close of 1879, openly admitted that the landlords were doing nothing whatever to alarm or distress the people. 'Up to the present time,' he said at Brooklyn, on January 24, 1880, 'there have been no evictions.' No evictions, and the Duchess of Marlborough had opened a fund, largely supported, to alleviate the passing distress. No evictions. No blood-thirsty landlords, ravening for the ruin of the Irish tenantry. But Parnell hastened to explain that it was because of the influence of the Land League! 'If the people had been left to themselves, as they were in 1847—then landlordism was synonymous with eviction.' What? Even the landlordism of Avondale estate? The colossal ignorance of Mr. Parnell and his audiences could not be more clearly exemplified. It was the quarter-acre clause which evicted the starving Irish, literally by the million. It was the clause forbidding relief to all applicants possessing more than a quarter-acre of land. Instead of feeding the starving farmers on their farms, and supplying them with good seed for the tilling of the ground against another year, the British Government, advised by the Manchester political

economy in vogue, had laid the land permanently waste of its population, and made the cessation of tillage and the surrender of the farms the indispensable condition for a plateful of yellow meal by the roadside. Thousands of landlords had shared almost their last crust with their ruined tenantry. Thousands of landlords were totally ruined themselves by the tremendous and appalling poor rate which generous Manchesterism had cast upon the unaided owners of Irish land. Thousands of Irish landlords—3000 accurately speaking—had been sold up by the Encumbered Estates Court as ruined insolvents a couple of years afterwards. Of course, there were hard and selfish men among the estate owners also. But the one tragic fact remains that the old Irish gentry went down in the same destruction as the old Irish farmers and labourers. The truth was that the Land League conspirators were not troubled by any considerations of the goodness or badness of landlords. They wanted revolution, not the welfare of Ireland. They wanted Jacobinism and insurrection. Ford, the paymaster-general of the League, wanted London to be set on fire, on a windy night, by fifty Irishmen, in fifty different places, all blazing together in the midnight winds, till in the course of a few hours the City of 5,000,000 lives was to be a furnace of flame and ashes, with, perhaps, 5,000,000 dead. 'Our Irish skirmishers would be well disguised. Language, skin-colour, dress, general manners, are all in favour of the Irish' (*Irish World*, August 28, 1880). For the sake of God's creation, let us hope that there is real lunacy in the brain of the monster who could write these words. If the complete plan of the conspiracy were to be put in a few words, it would be this: First, utilise the bad season—the first unprosperous year since 1870—to appeal to discontent and to denounce landlordism. Second, support your appeal by the distribution of money from America, the organisation of cupidity by the expectation of free land and the organisation of force and intimidation. Third, if the provocation of excitement leads to violence and repression, utilise the repression to provoke resentment

and perpetuate the general unsettlement of the country. Under this general plan most things anti-social and anti-national were possible, and most of them occurred. The Irish nation, actually in possession of a great constitutional and popular policy, under which all classes of the population could unite for Grattan's Parliament enhanced by Imperial partnership, was suddenly overrun by a huge organisation of paid agitators preaching civil war and subsidising the mercenaries of such a war. Uniting creeds and classes were violently dissevered, and a chapter of deliberate crime was substituted for the promised realisation of the Government by the King, Lords, and Commons of Ireland. What was to be the startling revelation of a hidden weakness of outside rule or un-Irish rule speedily occurred. This was the utter and permanent breakdown of the clumsy expedients of the British Administration for restoring the peace of Ireland. Whether it was the essential vice of party government paralysing, by the hope of future alliance with the criminals, the effort to suppress crime, whether it was some other reason, every coercive measure of the Government, whether under Lord Beaconsfield or Mr. Gladstone, totally failed to restore what had been altered or destroyed; and the man who was said on the highest authority to be marching through rapine to the ruin of the Empire was next invited to form an intimate partnership with the authority which had denounced him.

Of one thing we may be perfectly sure, that a National Government would not have tolerated ten minutes the invasion of the kingdom by the paid and avowed agents of an outside conspiracy exciting a war of classes in order to subvert the Constitution. An Irish Parliament would again have been as stern and relentless as it was against the conspiracy of Wolfe Tone. No second public meeting would have come into existence to endorse a claim to provoke disaffection in order to march by bloodshed to revolution. The chiefs of the conspiracy and their followers, influential or mean, would have shared no prison into which banquets, provided by the funds of the fraternity, were to be regularly

served as in a good restaurant. A polished and convivial Captain O'Shea would not have been sent to negotiate an arrangement between the political Claude Duval and the Administration. The only representatives of 'the King, Lords, and Commons of Ireland' to interview men who organised the overturn of society would have been the sheriff and Jack Ketch. The Irish gentry, instead of whining to the *Times* or flying to the Riviera, would have headed the yeomanry of the counties to disperse insurgent rioters and protect the execution of sentence. The ridiculous comedy of avowed and attested rebels explaining at large to the Sovereign's Commission of Judges how they had planned, and carried out the plan, to bring the Crown into overthrow and contempt, and excite the mob against property, would certainly not have happened if the Lords and Commons were still sitting in College Green. Confessors might be granted to such as required their ministrations, not descriptive reporters only. The Land League, even though it were headed by Napper Tandy, would have been as impossible under a Sovereign Government at Dublin as under a Sovereign Government at Berlin. The Act of Union professed to assure law to Ireland, and it cannot even enforce order!

Before passing to the next chapter, which will consider the position to which the Irish landed gentry had fallen, I have an episode to note, which probably had graver consequences, both for Parnellism and Parnell, than a good many events of more imposing dimensions.

It was towards the end of the session of 1879 when Parnell came to me one day, and said: 'Look, O'Donnell, I want your opinion about a matter which has been pressed upon me. There is a man named T. P. O'Connor, who says that you know him. He says that he has got a nomination for Derry at next election as a Liberal, but that he sympathises with Home Rule, and he wants us to help him in Derry as a Liberal. He says that a Home Ruler could not get returned, but that the Presbyterian vote, aided by the Nationalists, could return a Liberal friendly to Home Rule.

What do you think of our supporting a Liberal of that sort in Ireland? Do you know this Mr. T. P. O'Connor?'

'Certainly,' I replied, 'I know O'Connor quite well. He was a junior at Queen's College, Galway, when I was a senior. I remember he was a very bright and popular lad, with a decidedly eloquent turn of speech in the debating society. I knew him again in London when he was an overworked sub-editor on the *Daily Telegraph*. It was the time of the famous dispatches by balloon post from "Our Special Correspondent" in besieged Paris, and people said that the whole of the local colour, the vivid touches of real Paris life under bombardment, were due to picturesque expansion and the inspired vision of an Irish sub-editor.'

Parnell was hugely amused. 'But do you think that?'

'I do not think,' I said, 'but I am quite sure.'

Parnell laughed longer than perhaps I ever else saw him. Perhaps the whole dazzling future of the Irish News Agency lay revealed to his sub-consciousness.

I went on: 'I lost sight of O'Connor for some years. He seems to have grown an extreme Radical. I saw his name a short time ago as a delegate to a Bradlaughite convention.'

'Then you think that he would not serve us in Ireland.'

'I do not say that at all. A great many Irishmen in England, very good fellows, take up with strange company. But I think that O'Connor is politically a Liberal above all; and if you help him firmly into the saddle as a Liberal, he may never change his seat to ride in our regiment. Now he is a clever, kindly, Irish-helping, Ireland-loving young Irishman. Probably he would become an out-and-out Home Ruler if he could not be a Liberal. He might be very useful to us as a speaker and writer. Try him with Home Rule.'

Parnell agreed with me that we had no call to help a Liberal into Parliament for Derry. I told him that I had heard of O'Connor being in negotiation for an English Liberal seat—at Dewsbury, I thought. I had got some communications at the Confederation offices about it. 'Very well,' said Parnell, 'I shall tell Mr. O'Connor that we

can only support pledged Home Rulers.' I do not know if Parnell did so, but ultimately Mr. T. P. O'Connor became a Land League candidate at Galway,¹ where I had been rightful member, and where my faction was strong. I believe that it was my uncle, at the head of my old friends, who mainly elected Mr. T. P. O'Connor, M.P. for Galway, as a 'Home Ruler,' which turned out to be that very different commodity, a Parnellite Land Leaguer. In this way I may have deprived the Liberal party of an avowed and trusty member, if I did deprive them. Mr. T. P. O'Connor afterwards transmigrated to a safe seat in Liverpool, where he enjoys Irish support without a number of the little interferences which render the knees of an Irish home representative more compulsorily pliable than is always consistent with ease or dignity. Mr. T. P. O'Connor subsequently followed Mr. Gladstone against Parnell—with some pain and from Liberal convictions, I believe.

¹ When Mr. T. P. O'Connor appeared as Mr. Parnell's candidate at Galway in 1880, the leading Irish journal remarked: 'Mr. T. P. O'Connor we know nothing of. He is said to be a journalist.'—*Freeman's Journal*, March 29, 1880.

CHAPTER XV

THE ACT OF UNION THE KNEEL OF IRISH LANDED ESTATE— THE FOLLY AND THE FALL OF THE IRISH GENTRY

The Land League and the Landowners—The Fall of the Irish Gentry—Four Periods in their Fall—The Disfranchisement in 1829 fatal to Ireland—How the Potato Blight was made Famine—Encumbered Estates and Church Disendowment Acts.

THERE are few things in history so strangely cynical as the ruin which the Act of Union brought upon the Conservative class in Ireland. The visitor who strolls into a Landowners' Convention in Molesworth Hall, or some other of the halls for public meetings in Dublin, and listens to the anxious pleas with which a number of disturbed-looking gentlemen discuss some new measure of the London Parliament for thinning off the remaining possessions of Irish landlords, and notes the feeble anger with which some depreciatory innovation is denounced, will unconsciously ask himself, Can these poor ghosts of influence be all that is left of the haughty and capable caste which had ridden from Londonderry and Newtown Butler to the Boyne and Limerick, and which during the great century of their domination had raised the ruined Ireland of the year 1700, with its 1,000,000 stricken people, to the flourishing Ireland of the year 1800, with its 5,000,000 of an increasing and prospering population? Where are the proud Lords of Parliament? Where are the county representatives? Where is my Lord Charlemont's regiment? Where is Lord Downshire's? Where is Tottenham-in-boots, who shocked the ruffles and stockings of the noble House in College Green by striding in to a critical division, spattered and dusty, in his riding-suit? Who is so poor as to do these fallen images a shadow of reverence?

Nor do they even expect it. As they depart from their harmless manifestation and stroll towards the Kildare Club or the teashop in Grafton Street, not a hand may be lifted to do them courtesy. They are nearly as unimportant in the Irish metropolis, which owes to their fathers every architectural distinction which it possesses, as in Downing Street, where an indifferent minister may glance at a note of their meeting in a back column of the *Times*.

Yet this was England's garrison ! And this is what England has made of it. If the ancestors of some of them sold themselves to Pitt at the Union, the descendants of the traitors to Ireland have not reaped much profit from the gratitude of England. History has seen some remarkable changes and transformations, but none more astounding than the transformation of the Irish loyal party into the butts and laughing-stocks of the England which their grand-sires kept from overthrow ; while the party of Mr. Patrick Ford receive licence in blank to drive the loyalists out of the kingdom. If they could only be let off with being butts and laughing-stocks ! They have grown used to 'umble pie.' But they are to be expelled altogether, at the point of the muck-fork, as it were. ' Surely the Government cannot be so wicked as to let the Leaguers pick and choose our lands for confiscation, and fix any trifle for compensation.' So murmur the dignified spectres over their pacific teacups. ' I suppose they will, or the outrages will begin again.'¹ Surely the returned *émigrés* of France, with their old wigs and without their old properties, were a less sorry spectacle. They at least were despoiled by the hostile

¹ The *Times* of September 1 last contains the following paragraph, which seems to show that there are survivors of the Land League clergy still, or continuators :—

'The Rev. Martin Henry, of Foxford, speaking on Sunday to his parishioners on the eve of his departure to the United States to collect money for Foxford Church, said that the reason why the people were in poverty was because the moneys that they earned went to pay the landlord his high rents. There was a Bill now before Parliament which would change that state of affairs. If the Bill were thrown out by the House of Lords the time would have come when the people should take the matter in their own hands. If that time did come he would be with them. There was no hope for Ireland if the Bill did not pass, because the only way of settling the land question was by compulsory sale.'

revolution ; but it is the Union Parliament which has chivied on to the roadside the fallen gentry of Ireland.

To explain how the Land League was able to complete the work of Mr. Pitt, and to relieve the Irish gentry of landed estate as he had relieved them of political and social dignity and importance, is a task none the less deserving of being attempted because it has never been tried before. England, having used her former colonists for all they appeared to be worth to the new dispensation, was prepared to drop them out of memory as well. The Irish, carefully instructed in the history of what never happened, only knew that the landlords were the source of all evil, and were content to leave the matter there. As for the doomed victims themselves, they were so convinced that they were indispensable to the Empire, that the Empire had already flung them to the waste heap before it occurred to them that they might have had a history ! In reality, the post-Union existence or vegetation of the Irish Conservatives subdivides itself quite naturally into at least four periods, all strongly marked by special differentiations. The first period covers the years from the suppression of the Irish Parliament which was theirs—so far as England did not stuff it with reptiles and pensioners—down to the disfranchisement of the small freeholders—facetiously called Catholic emancipation—who used habitually and naturally to vote for the landlords to whom they owed their freeholds and whom they supported in turn. This was a time of some minor compensations for the Irish landowners in lieu of their lost Parliament ; but it was increasingly troubled by the carpet-baggers of O'Connellism, eager to evolve from carpet-baggers to placemen, and by the growing rivalry of the political priesthood, who, disliking the concord of owners and tillers, worked to disfranchise the latter in order to enfeeble the former. The second period starts with the disfranchisement of the Catholic tenantry, who usually supported the granters of their freeholds, and with the increasing encroachments of the O'Connellite place-hunters on that parliamentary representation which opened to

them Government salaries and, to their ecclesiastical proposers, increasing influence in the vote-hunting calculations of British parties. It may be said to end with the Encumbered Estates Act, which sold up by thousands the landlords of Ireland who had shared the general pauperisation of the land. This period fills a quarter of a century after the great disfranchisement of 1829. The third period extends from the selling up of the landlords to the disestablishment and disendowment of the Irish Protestant Church, on the plea that its endowments represented Catholic Church property of the sixteenth century. As the Catholic Church in England and Ireland in the sixteenth century had got hold of the third of all good land in the two kingdoms—which was a large reason of the Church's downfall—the accumulated back rents, unearned increment, and unpaid interests of all kinds on one-third of the best land of England, Ireland, and Wales for the last three or four centuries, which must be owing to the exalted prelates of Armagh and Westminster, would seriously diminish the budgetary resources of Chancellors of the Exchequer, even were they Harold Coxes and Chiozza Money rolled into one. The British Government in 1866 were satisfied with robbing the religious resources of the Irish landlords. Mr. Gladstone explained that he had done it to please the Fenians, as he had been greatly impressed by the 'chapel bell' of the Clerkenwell explosion. One drawback to this explanation was, that there was no excessive love whatever between the Fenians and the Churchmen. The great thing was to strip that section of the Irish population whom the veracious Act of Union had specially and solemnly guaranteed 'for ever,' or longer. Some over-sensitive Irish landlords were heard to remark at this time, '*Can the British Government break its promise?*'¹ The fourth period opens with the

¹ If the gentle reader be an enthusiastic collector of fossils the following extract from the fundamental Articles of Union, which are the high-water mark of British policy in Ireland, may adorn his museum: 'ARTICLE FIVE.—That it be the Fifth Article of Union, that the Churches of England and Ireland, as now by law established, shall be united into one Protestant Episcopal Church to be called the United Church of England and Ireland . . . and that *the continuance and preservation of the said United Church*

foregoing financial Fra Diavolo operation on the Irish Protestant Church, and will proceed through the first Gladstone Land Act of 1870 to the second Gladstone Land Act of 1881, accelerated by Messrs. Devoy and Davitt, down to the plain and honest confiscation—honesty being a relative term in these high latitudes—which at the present moment engages the reluctant admiration of the cowhunters of Dillonia and the high and puissant Ladies Molly Maguire.

As the epoch of Irish history which began with the disfranchisement of the landlords' freeholders, continued with the selling up of three thousand of the landlords themselves, and further progressed with the disestablishment and disendowment of the landlord Church, is also marked by the steady destruction or emigration of half the population of Ireland, it can hardly be urged with much force that the ruin of the Irish landlords brought marked prosperity to the Irish nation.

Being a historian above all things, I must not be supposed to be an apologist. Assuredly I am no apologist for the avarice, the insolence, the dishonesty, and cruelty of the English Land Code in Ireland in those days, which was doubly avaricious, insolent, dishonest, and cruel, in so far as it was administered by a class of landowners who were taught by every instinct of alienation and every incitement of authority to regard themselves as the enemies of their Catholic and Gaelic countrymen. It was precisely this attitude of alienation and antipatriotism which, after serving the British policy for generations, became at a later date a pretext for crushing the landowners as the nation had been crushed. 'Be our garrison' was the exhortation in the first period. 'You are unpopular' has been the reproach in the later day. Mr. Pitt had inflexibly instructed his representatives in Ireland before the Union to oppose

as the Established Church of England and Ireland shall be deemed to be *an essential and fundamental part of the Union.*

I have had much pleasure in pointing the attention of many distinguished foreigners to this interesting illustration of the blinding effect of English-made treaties.

every popular reform which might strengthen the hold of the Irish Parliament on the affections of national Ireland. The Government host of kept members, the led captains, the sinecurists, the nominees, the imported bullies, and the imported hacks, were regularly marched into the division lobby which shouted 'No!' at every good Bill and every honourable resolution. 'Nothing until the Union is passed. Everything, Catholic emancipation, everything after the Union is law.' That was one of the ways in which Lord Castlereagh was instructed to cajole the Catholic clergy, only too willing to be cajoled. But after the Union, it was resolved to maintain the evils of dissension and injustice because the strife of Protestant against Catholic, the opposition of owner to cultivator, remained still more than before the policy of England. The Protestant ascendancy was really encouraged to be an ascendancy, and the Catholic masses were systematically outlawed, just to train and perpetuate that sense of immeasurable superiority over their countrymen which was expected to bind the Protestants to the functions of a garrison and to a corresponding forgetfulness that they were the sons of the Volunteers of Dungannon. The position of the cultivator was usually a hard and frequently a hideous one. But there are two things to be borne in mind. The first is, that the worst oppressors beyond all comparison and all extenuation were the so-called middlemen, who hired large areas of land, usually at very moderate rentals, from the landowners, and who then rack-rented to the quick and bone the actual cultivators. Land for which the middleman paid ten shillings an acre to the owner paid £4 an acre to the middleman. And the Government in London had no censures or enactments to check the middleman. Nothing but legal enactments could check the middleman's extortions, because population was increasing, competition for farms was insane, and land fetched any premium that greed could exact, and poverty, satisfied with bare living, could engage to pay. That is the first fact of the economic situation, a fact with which England did not interfere. But

there used to be another fact which tended to check the middleman and to guarantee the cultivator. This was the working of that Act of the Irish Parliament in 1793 which had granted the parliamentary franchise to Catholics as well as Protestants who had a freehold in land. To have your farm on a lease for three lives was to have a freehold. To have it on a lease for life was a freehold. In an immense majority of cases the estate rule was to grant leases for three lives. It is admitted on all hands that the Irish landowners set about granting freeholds and turning tenants into parliamentary electors by thousands and by scores of thousands. The O'Connellites and the Manchester economists tell us with huge disdain that the landlords emancipated their tenants in this way by hundreds and thousands and scores of thousands 'in order to be supported by the votes of those enslaved electors.' What could be more horrible, more unmanly, than the spectacle of tenants on good terms with their landlords? What more destructive of the finest principles of Manchester than to have tenants voting for landlords? The monstrosity of voting for a man who would keep up the prices of agricultural produce, who would keep out foreign competition, who would secure that the poor Irish farmer would get a market for his produce instead of the market going to great agricultural investment and export companies in Southern Russia or Middle America! Clearly it was the primary duty of the enslaved tenantry to break their slavery by voting for the brisk offspring of the sedate publican whose profits had made his son a barrister, and whose generous piety had secured a nomination which should lead Mr. Barrister from a seat in Parliament to a Government salary, perhaps to the judicial bench itself. What, indeed, could be more galling to the friend of humanity than to meet a column of five hundred jolly freeholders marching into the polls behind—oh, horror!—their own landlord! Mr. Barrister O'Connell, who was to be returned for Clare 'against the best landlord in Ireland,' was quite painfully affected by the scandal of tenants consulting the political

wishes of their estate owners. They ought to consult the shoddy agitators who were living on another sort of 'rint'—the O'Connell collections—pending the time when they could get quartered on the taxpayers in return for steady support, in 'O'Connell's tail,' to the Melbourne Ministry or the Russell Ministry. Mr. Barrister O'Connell was quite pathetic over the matter in his artless confidences before the Parliamentary Commission of 1825. 'The freeholders are part of the live-stock of the estate. . . . In some of the counties the voters are sold as regularly as cattle.' The honourable sprouts of his own tail were to be sold as regularly as cattle. His own sons, and sons-in-law, and cousins to the thirty-third degree were to get the full price which their relative and patron could squeeze from the ministry which he delighted to honour. But in those glorious days of direct bribery and comparative honesty the only thing which shocked O'Connell was tenants voting for their landlords, even when it might be charitably suspected that the landlord got a valuable consideration for his own pocket by the transaction. We never pay a bribe out of our own pocket nowadays. We only tell our expected electors that, if they vote for us, we will distribute somebody else's property among them and their belongings. This is modern incorruptibility. So ancient, nevertheless, that it was largely practised with inferior success by Catilina and more successfully by Caesar on the stump. It used to be called proscription. It is now called a popular Budget or a Compulsory Sale Bill.

It is, I suppose, an infirmity of human nature, but until Creation has been remade by the Manchester School, Eton will take sides with Eton, and the staidest city clerk, if his employer is at all a good fellow, will be more than mildly interested if the governor beats the other fellow. Even in days of stainless chivalry, as we are told, the vassal knights and men-at-arms who might use their freedom of election by joining the raiders of their liege's manors, instead of knocking them on the head, would have obtained scant sympathy from their fellow vassals in the worst that might befall them. My

own recollections of stories told in childhood in the Gaelic west are full of tales of tenantries who went out to vote, and crack a head or a score, against opposing tenantries, while the rival shouts of 'Hi! for Lynch,' 'Hi! for Daly,' or maybe 'Hi! for O'Flaherty,' attested a personal enthusiasm perhaps as noble as any 'Three cheers for the man that dhruv the cows.' There may have been, and there was, plenty of irregularity, plenty of illegality, plenty of legality—which is often worse—plenty of human weakness and sinful ostentation about those long processions of tenant freeholders, 'marchin' to vote for the masther's man.' But here is this fact for the friend of humanity. It was an immense inducement on the side of good feeling and security of tenure, an immense guarantee of tenant right and tenant permanency, *when every landlord in Ireland knew that he could double his electoral importance by doubling the tenant-right freeholds upon his estate.*

I ask the impartial reader to read, remember, and meditate the following extracts from the 'History of Ireland,' by Mr. John Mitchell, with regard to this deadly blow at the good relations between Irish landlords and Irish tenants. The author is the famous Young Irelander and rebel of 1848 who, after condemnation to transportation, and escape to America from his Australian detention, was elected and disqualified as member for Tipperary in the opening days of the Disraeli Parliament. His history is a singularly able work. He was a master of English style. It is not full of the love of England. On the contrary. I advise, all the more, every English politician especially to make himself master of Mitchell's statements and comments. Probably there is no Irish Nationalist throughout the world who has not read Mitchell's 'History of Ireland,' and re-read most or all of it many times. Here is how the typical Nationalist historian estimates the Freeholder Disfranchisement Act of 1829:—

The most fatal blow to the liberties of the Irish people was the Act for disfranchisement of the forty-shilling freeholders and for raising the county qualification to £10 a year—five times

the qualification required in England. . . . There was throughout the island a very unsettled and uneasy condition of the public mind. Men were told that they were *relieved* and *emancipated*, but they felt no advantage from it whatever. They found themselves very generally disfranchised; and what was worse—the landlords were refusing to make new leases of farms, and were breaking the existing leases where they could, *having no longer the motive to rear up a small freehold population for the hustings*.¹

Mark those words of fatal augury, pregnant with the worst disasters to landlords and tenants both, with all the merciless horrors of the over-quarter-acre clearances of the famine which no population of enfranchised peasants existed to check, of organised agrarian crime, when the whole agrarian population had been practically outlawed from the Constitution. If the attack on the Irish Protestant Church thirty-seven years later was a literal and express violation of the Act of Union, this disfranchisement of scores of thousands of electors who had received the suffrage from the Irish Parliament was a far worse violation, even though the forty-shilling freeholders had not their name actually written in the pretended Imperial Bond. There is certainly no example of a similar breach of faith and breach of human right in the history of any Government claiming to be constitutional. The Irish freeholders had been enfranchised by the Irish Parliament in 1793. They were now stript of electoral rights thirty-six years old in the year 1829. Nor was a single charge alleged against this population, almost the entire population of Ireland—for a miserable remnant of one-eighth the original electorate alone remained—in order to justify or attenuate the British outrage on national and personal right. By the one blow the Irish territorial aristocracy, the very bulwark of social and political conservatism, was deprived of its main or only body of adherents in the popular mass, and the whole mass of the Irish agrarian democracy was deprived of every constitutional means of redress or defence and thrown back

¹ Vol. ii, p. 168.

for indefinite generations upon the resources of savage vengeance or protection, the murder league and the hedge-side blunderbuss. Having accomplished this work of hell and bedlam, the Union Parliament turned to 'the next business on the orders of the day,' fatuously smiling, applauding itself most probably, with the serene ineptitude of British government over Ireland.

If we turn to the *Annual Register* for 1829, in the report of the debate in the Commons on the introduction of the Irish Nation Disfranchisement Bill, as it might be justly called, we find that the minister in charge of the Bill, Sir Robert Peel—fatal name to Ireland and Irish agriculture—openly and expressly avowed that it was intended by the measure to cope with the evil of the Irish landlords having too much influence with their tenants, and too much influence in the State through the votes of their tenants! To cripple the Irish landlords, to separate them for ever from influence with the Irish masses, to reduce them to the part of mere dependants and hangers-on of the London Government, to make them the screen of British policy, and the excuse for British failures; why, strip them of their Irish tenant-electorate. It was the shrewd way to set them against their tenants in other things as well. Between a landlord class exasperated by loss of prestige, and a tenant class surly with the sense of betrayal, there might be predicted eternal hostility. When Sir Robert Peel—again that name—had introduced unconditional Free Trade a few years later and made tillage the worst paying of Irish industries, while the Irish landlords could no longer get a single vote in defence of agriculture from the disfranchised paupers who cumbered the fields now rendered unproductive; then, then, indeed, the triumphant hour of Westminster legislation had come round full circle, and eviction was ripe to finish what disfranchisement and outlawry had inaugurated.

The Bill for disfranchising the forty-shilling freeholders, (says the *Annual Register* of 1829) was introduced by Sir Robert Peel, on the ostensible ground that there was too great

a disposition on the part of Irish landlords to divide their land into minute portions, that the franchise was a mere instrument with which the landed aristocracy exercised power and control over the elections.

The English minister had tuned himself to echo the wail of O'Connell the 'Liberator,' that the Irish tenant voters voted for their landlords; which minister and agitator agreed was an intolerable thing.

In Mitchell's 'History of Ireland' wonder is expressed that O'Connell made no protest against the wholesale disfranchisement of the Irish countryside. 'It is singular that O'Connell said not a word at any meeting, nor wrote any letter, protesting against this wholesale abolition of the civil and political rights of those to whom he owed his election for Clare.' The fact was that the Catholic clergy in Ireland, with some individual exceptions—such as the great Bishop of Kildare and Leighlin, Dr. Doyle—hated a tenant franchise in Ireland, which habitually went with the landlords, quite as much as did the British Government. Though on some recent occasions, as at Clare, the tremendous intensity of the ultra-religious pressure had forced the small freeholders to vote against 'the best of landlords,' the clergy knew that as a rule the tenant vote went to the man who gave the leasehold and who defended agriculture because he lived by agriculture, and wanted to continue to do so. The peasants might follow the priests once in a way for what they were told was 'Catholic Emancipation,' when they were adjured from every altar 'not to be traitors to Holy Church and the Blessed Mother of God,' when they were assured that 'men had dropped dead for voting against Daniel O'Connell.' That trick could not work permanently. As soon as 'Catholic Emancipation' had been obtained, as soon as there could no longer be talk about the Church of God and the Holy Mother of God, of course the peasants would come back to the leaders who led the rural interest. There could be no reasonable doubt of that. In fact, the whole of the pother and pressure about 'Catholic Emancipation' would be absolutely

thrown away, from the ecclesiastical point of view, if the tenants were *not* disfranchised at the same time that the Catholic place-hunters could enter the British Parliament. In the first place, the place-hunters could not possibly enter Parliament, except in homœopathic doses, unless the tenants were prevented from electing 'the masther's man'; and clerical representatives in merely homœopathic proportions could not possibly decide the fate of British Cabinets, and could not, consequently, lead up to interesting bargains between exigent Maynooth and grateful Dublin Castle, or grateful Whip's Office, House of Commons. O'Connell was not only silent, as John Mitchell complained; O'Connell was plaintively vociferous against leaving the vote in the hands of the people. The people, seven-eighths of them, always voted with the landlords. 'The forty-shilling freeholders,' he deposed before the Select Committee in 1825, 'are part of the live stock of an estate.' It was a brutal saying. On the hustings at a Clare election he had to admit it, and tried to explain it. 'For the purpose of carrying emancipation'—emancipation that outlawed seven-eighths of the nation—'I consented to the disfranchisement of the forty-shilling freeholders, because I thought that it would be impossible to free them from the influence of their landlords.' O'Connell was the man of the clergy.

Let it not be supposed that I mean to blame any more than I mean to praise the clergy in this matter. I write history. The clergy acted under constant direction from Rome. Every point had been weighed at Rome. It was not in the States of the Church in the year 1829 that you would find many advocates of popular suffrage, or especially popular suffrage which would elect Protestant landlords or any sort of Protestants to any sort of Government. There was no suffrage at all in the States of the Church. There was no Parliament at all in the States of the Church. Why, on earth, should the least important Monsignor in Rome care the value of the smallest Roman coin whether Irish peasants had votes or whether there ought or not to

be any Parliament at all. It happened that there was a Parliament at London, that the English Government was made and unmade by that very curious and ridiculous institution, and that, as a consequence, the presence of forty, fifty, eighty safe Catholic votes might have tremendous influence in bringing an English Government to behave properly in matters dear, and supremely dear, to the Holy See. Again I point out that I neither blame nor praise. I write history. I go so far as to say that, given the conscientious views of the Roman authorities, given the importance in their eyes of being able to influence the Government of the British Empire, it might be very culpable on their part if they boggled at the disfranchisement of a hundred thousand Irishmen, or two hundred thousand Irishmen, when their suffrage might stand in the way of having a safe and certain body of approved Catholic deputies in the British Parliament. The natural and necessary consequence was, that the Catholic Episcopate in Ireland were practically unanimous in requiring the disfranchisement of the Irish masses.

Exceptions prove rules. There was one exception to the unanimity of the Catholic Episcopate against the small freeholders. This exception was that famous Dr. Doyle, Bishop of Kildare and Leighlin, to whom I have already referred. In his famous 'Letter on the State of Ireland,' published in the very year of disfranchisement, Dr. Doyle had most strongly condemned the proposal to outlaw the forty-shilling freeholders from the electoral suffrage. Dr. Doyle had not concealed from O'Connell himself his deep indignation at O'Connell's betrayal of the freeholders. When the crisis of the freeholders came, when at the great Carlow meeting O'Connell explicitly demanded the disfranchisement of the overwhelming mass of the Irish electors, Dr. Doyle pointedly declined to repeat his public protest against the disfranchisement. Led by O'Connell and the clergy, the Carlow meeting voted for the disfranchisement of the peasantry in mass. The clergy knew that a franchise confined to the well-to-do Catholics,

the richest farmers, the most prosperous grocers and publicans, would be infinitely less dependent on landlords, less concerned about estate hopes and fears, more devoted to the suggestions of bishops and canons, especially as the bulk of the Catholic clergy are always drawn from this urban and rural middle class. It was all over with the peasant vote. Church and State had combined for its extinction. The Protestant landlord was stripped of his electoral importance. The Catholic place-hunter waxed exceedingly, and voted as the bishops directed. The landlord's tail was cut off. O'Connell's tail sprouted, and grew, and spread over the green benches of the Commons at Westminster. To complete the picture, it should be added that the Wellington Cabinet were convinced that they were promoting Conservatism in Ireland! So early had British policy announced its unswerving confidence in the loyal competence of Maynooth to co-operate in the maintenance and defence of the Act of Union in Ireland. In showing how thoroughly the ground under the feet of the Irish landlord class had been mined and subverted, so that it collapsed almost at once at the assault by the Land League, it should be understood that, though the disfranchisement of the landlords' best voters formed the characteristic culmination of the plans of British policy for the subordination of the Anglo-Irish element in Ireland, the process of segregating the Irish Conservatives from the life of their own country and the comradeship of their own countrymen had been pursued through a score of larger or lesser measures during the whole of the thirty years or so since the suppression of the Irish Parliament. To keep the Irish territorial class from seeking any allies but the gentlemen in Downing Street and Dublin Castle, to sow hate between them and the Catholic population, to keep them in the position of a mere colony and outpost of England divided by unappeasable rancours from the Irish nation, and then, when more useful allies had been at length discerned in the corruption and servility of another quarter, to fling the Irish landlords to Erebus or further ;

that was now the settled policy of Westminster. Gratified with minor favours, selected for Crown salaries and open jobbery, encouraged to be Orangemen—and the Orangemen encouraged to be lawless persecutors—the Irish gentry descended rapidly the scale of denationalisation; till the extinction of their tenant electorate at once annihilated the last hope of their becoming a native power, and flung wide open to the British Government the roads to an understanding with a different order of supporters. The Irish gentry, who a generation ago had been the proud chiefs of Ireland, were henceforth to be proud of the petty emoluments of janitors and keepers. In a speech of mordant veracity, delivered at a Newry election in 1812, the illustrious orator Curran exposed the policy of the Union Government towards gentry and people. ‘The Irish Catholic was taught to believe that if he surrendered his country, he would cease to be a slave. The Irish Protestant was cajoled into the belief that if he concurred in the surrender, he would be placed upon the neck of a hostile faction. Wretched dupe! you might as well persuade the jailer that he is less a prisoner than the captives he locks up, merely because he carries the key in his pocket. By that reciprocal animosity, however, Ireland was surrendered.’ To be jailers of their country, the Irish gentry were taught to forget that they had been the lords of Parliament. But until the extinction of the tenant vote there was always the danger for English policy that the despised warders might, on some strong occasion, remember that they could become again what they used to be, and at the head of grateful followers renew the haughty independence of 1782. *With the disfranchisement of the one class which the Irish landlords could still lead*, the whole triumph of English policy, whether it were Free Trade or compulsory sale of estates, the quarter-acre clause or the Kilmainham treaty, was absolutely assured. During the period under review, while the Union Government was working up to the Coup d’État of 1829, the Government grant to Maynooth had been doubled; the laity, for whom Maynooth

had been founded by the Irish Parliament on equal terms with the clergy, were excluded from Maynooth College and supplied with no equivalent or improvement; the Papacy had granted a veto on candidates for Catholic bishoprics to the British Cabinet; and his Grace the Duke of Wellington had obtained through Cardinal Consalvi the Archbishopric of Armagh and Catholic Primacy of Ireland for his useful friend, Rev. Dr. Curtis, who, as rector of the Irish College of Salamanca, had organised the main service of the Military Intelligence Department by means of the Spanish clergy on the scene of the operations of Napoleon's marshals. The mitre of St. Patrick's See crowned the utility which had facilitated Vittoria and Talavera.

The way was clearly open for a further advance on the road of the ruin of the Irish gentry.

The second period of quarter of a century, between the disfranchisement of the peasantry in 1829 and the Encumbered Estates Compulsory Sale Acts of 1849 and 1850, was filled by tragic occurrences; which, besides desolating the nation at large, were specially utilised by the benevolent genius of Westminster to deepen the unpopularity and accelerate the destruction of the Irish owners of landed estate. It is sufficient to recall the anti-tithe war; the free admission of foreign corn; the Black Famine and the quarter-acre clause; the famine poor rates on landed estates; the compulsory sale of the estates which had become insolvent in the famine—without the slightest mercy to insolvency occurring through remission of rent and relief of distress; the incoming of the hard new landlords who had become landowners by purchase in the Encumbered Sales Court. Never did the mysterious visitations of Providence combine more disastrously with the baleful folly or malice of man in order to sweep and lash with misfortunes a population of owners and tillers of land.

The outcome of the anti-tithe war was characteristic of the whole series. The cultivators of land had always

been liable for the payment of tithes in support of the clergy of the Established Church ; and the heat of religious passions engendered in the agitation for Catholic emancipation intensified the dislike of Catholics to pay for the Church of Protestants. After the year 1830, accordingly, a fierce opposition was gradually organised which led to bloody encounters and loss of lives—the peasants attacking the tithe proctors and the police. At the same time O'Connell declared that the Irish people were determined to get rid of tithes, 'and get rid of them they will.' The result was serio-comic. An Act of Parliament made tithe payable by the landowners, and the landowners added it to the rent ! The farmers now paid the tithe as before, but the landlords got the blame of collecting it. The 'Catholics still paid the tithe' in spite of O'Connell, and the Government had saddled its unpopularity on the landlords.

The free admission of foreign corn, hotly demanded by the great manufacturing interests in England, spelt ruin to Irish agriculture, but was warmly supported by O'Connell and his place-hunting tail. The peasant vote having been abolished by the suppression of the forty-shilling freeholders, the landlords were helpless to obtain any modification of a measure which rendered tillage worthless and which starved the Irish countryside. If the Irish landowner continued tillage, he could get no rent ; and if he adopted pasturage, he was an inhuman exterminator. If he accepted the loss of rent, creditors soon seized the estate, and introduced pasturage which would pay. In either case the wretched peasantry, destitute of votes themselves, and deserted by O'Connell and his tail, were taught to lay all their curses on the head of the landlord ; while O'Connell, who had welcomed and aided the invasion of foreign competition, was crowned with the benedictions of priests and congregations. A marvellous country and a marvellous Government !

In the midst of the opening difficulties created in Ireland by Free Trade came the failure of the potato, followed by

the refusal of the Government to give relief to any starving man or woman who possessed more than one quarter-acre of land. It was the eviction in mass of the starving population; and the famishing wretches on the roadside were again taught to curse the helpless landlord. By a brilliant extension of its habitual beneficence, the Union Parliament now passed an Act to help the famine districts by levying a rate in aid *on the districts which were not yet in a state of famine*. There was this important limitation, however. The non-famine districts on which a rate in aid could be levied must be *districts in Ireland*. Districts in England and Scotland were to be exempt. A district not yet starving in County Dublin must pay for a starving district in Kerry or Donegal; but a flourishing district in Middlesex or Yorkshire, in Kent or the Lothians, was to have no burthen or contribution for Kerry or Donegal; though Middlesex was in the same 'United Kingdom' as Dublin, and Donegal, and Kerry. For the purposes of taxation and government, for the payment of imposts to England, Ireland was *in* the 'United Kingdom.' For the purposes of a rate in aid of famine, the 'United Kingdom' ceased to exist! Kerry and Donegal need be no concern to the ratepayers of Middlesex and Yorkshire; but they must be to the ratepayers of Dublin! The Act of Union was suspended or abolished as regarded community of famine relief. Let the Irish landlords and tenants suffice for themselves. And even so, the Irish rates in relief were not allowed to be administered by Irish landlords and tenants. A Government Board, consisting of an English engineer, an English commissary-general, and an English poor-law official, a retired colonel from Wales and a retired colonel from Scotland, were appointed to apply all moneys for Irish relief. The Irish landlords were excluded as the Irish masses were excluded. And no starving tenant of an Irish landlord was allowed to receive any poor relief so long as he continued to cultivate a farm on his landlord's estate! He must quit everything beyond a quarter-acre if he was to receive a mouthful

of Indian meal from the Anglo-Scoto-Welsh engineers and half-pay colonels. The same English law which refused food to the starving Irish farmer and his family, refused labour to the landowners' land. You cannot force a hundred farmers to surrender their farms and at the same time keep them on their farms cultivating and fertilising them. The Conservative *Evening Mail* of Dublin exclaimed: 'There is every prospect of the lands remaining untilled and unsown for the next year.' Of course that is why it was done. And the Government was preparing to evict the landowners next! The wretched country folk believed that the law, forbidding relief to farmers who did not quit their land, was made by the landlords. As the Rev. Father Fitzpatrick, a parish priest of West Cork, wrote to a Dublin paper: 'The ground continues unsown and uncultivated. There is a mutual distrust between the landlord and the tenant.' The evicted tenants took to shooting at the landlords instead of at the British Government! Then there was another Coercion Act.

Having driven the Irish cultivators off the Irish land, having ruined the landlords with want of farmers and with excess of famine rates, the British Government next proceeded to sell up the insolvent landlords of the whole nation! In 1849 and 1850 the Encumbered Estates Acts were passed to provide a special and speedy court for selling up all estates in distress. The expenses of living in London since the Union had, previous to this, encouraged lavish expenditure which crippled many estates in Ireland. London money-lenders wanted money or land cheap—as it must be when sold in a famine-struck market—in order that they might resell it or rack-rent it at a profit. Within seven years upwards of 3000 Irish landowners were sold out of house and land! Seven thousand two hundred new purchase landlords obtained the estates of the old gentry, and, in hundreds of cases, the best gentry. These new purchase landlords set at the work of making their investments pay by screwing up rents on tenants with whom they had no hereditary connexion, and who were

to them mere paying serfs. The whole landlord class was damned and double-damned by the infamy of the new speculators in rents. The gulfs of hate were dugged deep and broad between the Irish tenantry and the landlords for ever. The British Government thus made the crusade of Davitt, and Devoy, and Patrick Egan, and Patrick Ford a sure and certain and easy success. That was to be the end of the fallen lords of the Irish Parliament, who had been the proud citadel of England, and who had got first the Act of Union to degrade them, and this—total ruin for the best of them—as the crown of loyalty.

The closing period of Irish landlordism may be said to extend from the Encumbered Estates Acts of 1849 and 1850 down to our own time. The British Government had during the previous half-century fixed firmly the essential features of the isolation and unpopularity of the landowners who had in a couple of generations been persecuted, exasperated by every species of governmental neglect and outrage that have been spread in other countries over the space of many centuries. The landlords, though to be a landlord's man was to be the butt of increasing animosity, were still mocked with the name of 'England's garrison,' even when England was plundering their Church and preparing to give all that remained of themselves a second and worsened dose of Encumbered Estates Court legislation. With this difference, however: the Encumbered Estates Act was meant to kill off the landowners who had sunk in insolvency in the general tragedy of the famine. The next legislation from Westminster to the address of the Irish gentry was to attack all the estates which were rich and prosperous, or relatively so. The opening blow was dealt at the Church of the Irish gentry.

Let me say at once, that if the British Government considered, in a tardy and incredible access of repentance, that the Irish Catholic masses were being impoverished by existing civil and religious relations, the British Government had a treasury and a credit available for the payment of full compensation to the Catholics. The

Protestant clergy had as good a right as the British Government itself—if not a somewhat better right—to the results of the territorial or sectarian emoluments which dated from the sixteenth century. If the Protestant Church had no right to property dating from that time because it had belonged at that time to non-Protestant institutions of a religious character, where were the better rights of the Protestant Crown or the Protestant landholders of any kind? The least that repentant England was called upon to do was to discover some Catholic heir of the Catholic Plantagenets and Stuarts, and let him bear the sceptre which was evidently a mere badge of lawless appropriation in the hand of a representative of the blessed Reformation and the glorious Revolution. Similarly the whole of the allotments to the Tudor and Cromwellian confiscators were justly null and void. The attack on the Irish Protestant Church was simply undertaken to please the English Nonconformists and the Irish priesthood. Both Nonconformists and priesthood were eminently important and influential bodies. I am not disputing, but only recording. That is all that is required. In immediate application to this part of my subject the impoverishment of the Church of the Irish Protestants, involving the closing of outlying places of worship, the suppression of parishes, the flight of a large number of the clergymen, who had become either superfluous or apprehensive of still worse things—all this diminution of the facilities for Protestant religion necessarily diminished the amenities of Ireland as a residence, promoted absenteeism, and promoted unpopularity. The £6,000,000 taken from the Irish Protestant community and placed at the disposal of the British Treasury merely reinforced the means of influencing Irish politicians by a foreign influence, usually of a party character. If the Catholics owned rightfully the £6,000,000 or any similar sum, it should have come from the British Treasury and not from the ancient endowments of Irish Protestantism. I may add that there was this additional element of foul faith in the conduct of the Union Parliament towards the Irish

Protestants: the existing facilities and endowments of Protestant worship had been part, and a chief part, of the inducements made by England to bring Protestants to settle in Ireland. The Protestants had come. They had been loyal with passionate loyalty to the English connexion. The religious guarantees which were their hereditary right were now violated, and their property in their religious endowments was deliberately confiscated for the party objects of the politicians who, from time to time, controlled the Union Parliament. It seems to me to be difficult for any upholders of that Parliament to condemn the programme of the Land League with any moral authority, after the wholesale confiscation of the Irish gentry's property through the faminising legislation and the confiscation of the Irish gentry's Church by the Disendowment Act, which, as we have seen, was also a distinct violation of the Fifth Article of the Act of Union. By the time that the Land League was established, the British Government itself had thoroughly habituated the Irish masses to consider that any measure of wrong or confiscation against the Irish gentry was legitimate, and that popular violence even had almost a precedent in the policy of England against Irish estates and the most constitutional and legal rights of the owners of Irish estates. If you can strip a branch of the Christian Church, merely because it is one branch and not another, of £6,000,000 which has belonged to it for centuries and which is solemnly guaranteed to it by the fundamental Act that is the sole pretext for England's interference in Ireland at all, then the ordinary Irish mind cannot be blamed very seriously for thinking that far less venerable forms of property are at least equally open to judicious confiscation.

It is needless and superfluous to dwell upon such further Acts dealing with the Irish gentry as the Gladstone Land Act of 1871. Let it be granted that the Irish landlords had lost the sense of what they owed to the cultivators of the soil and required to be forced to discharge some of the duties of landowners. Speaking with rigorous

exactness, that would only complete the proof that the constant efforts of the Union Parliament to sow enmity between the tenantry and the landowners in Ireland had been crowned with baleful success. If the Union Parliament now declared that the Irish landowners were a species of public enemies, requiring special bonds and prohibitions, it is impossible to avoid asking what single Act of the Union Legislature from 1800 to the present had been passed with the object of cultivating national and patriotic sentiments between the gentry and the mass of the Irish nation? There was not a single Act of that kind passed or attempted to be passed by any British party during the entire century.

The opportunity that the Land League was about to seize had been rendered still more facile and complete by one consequence of the Act of Union which has not received the attention due to its great importance. The consequence of the Union to which I refer was the spread of a real demoralisation among the Irish gentry produced by their long disuse of public life, their long separation from the ambitions of their class and nation, their long isolation and inaction, their want of careers and the capacity for careers; all which were the inevitable consequence of the abolition of their ancient position as the dominant element in the Irish Parliament, and as, indeed, the Irish Parliament itself, so far as it was not adulterated by the base tribe of nominees introduced and maintained by the English party and Government. If England were to-morrow and for a century to be governed by some oversea power, instead of the English Government; if, in addition, the English governing parties found themselves transformed into supporters and admirers of the foreign power which had thrust them out of all self-government of their own country; if something impossible like this were to happen, it could not be more of a revolution and degradation of the old governing classes of England than had been the revolution and degradation of the old governing caste of native Parliamentary Ireland. They were sorry out-of-works who henceforth set themselves

the task of helping the outsiders that had deprived them of a country and nation. Where were the bold and masterful men who had ruled in the Senate House in College Green? Such of them as entered the service of the State, in civil administration in India, in cavalry and infantry regiments of the regular army, showed in numberless cases that the gallant blood and the resolute soul were still worthy of the iron race. But at home in native Ireland, they went through life listlessly like men without a country, or who belonged to some other land. Mr. Pitt would hardly have felt proud of his work if he could see the great surrender of the ruling stock of those fierce, bold centuries which had ended for ever with the ancient Parliament. To dis sever a ruling race from the means, and opportunities, and the duties of guarding and holding a native land, must always be a deplorable experiment. The Irish gentry could still—until county councils with popular election had blessed the island—administer the modest sphere of Grand Jury business. Even there, the mass of their countrymen looked on, without thanks, with much sneering, with loud suggestions that every interest but the public interest was consulted. As a fact, the Grand Juries had a high standard of probity; but high or low, they got no thanks. ‘The class which had sold their country’—again a falsehood!—were separated from sympathy, since they were separated from patriotism. As a matter of fact, it was the Catholics who had betrayed the old Parliament, and it was the Protestants who had been only beaten down by the bought nominees and the Papist vote. But since then much had happened. The fallen lords of Parliament had kissed the hand which degraded them; while the descendants of the men who ‘followed Lowry Corry like the Macedonian phalanx’ were shouting, and subscribing, and conspiring ‘to get back the Old House in College Green.’

Increasingly excluded from the parliamentary representation, always identified with English rather than Irish interests, harassed by the strange interference of

English legislation even more than by the sullen hostility which had grown up between them and their countrymen, the Irish gentry seemed to give up the struggle for a place under the sky. Even Old Trinity, that University of Dublin which had educated a dozen generations of Irish landowners, was finding it increasingly difficult to make anything of hundreds of the dispatriciated class. They shot, and fished, and rode. That was the end of them. Conscious that the England for which they had lost their position was even now intriguing with their mortal enemies, those unhorsed cavaliers still lacked the spirit to spring into the saddle again. They lacked even the fitness. One of the most distinguished scholars of Trinity, Professor Mahaffy, who would have been distinguished in any country, and more than influential in any country but Ireland, has placed on record a sad description of the fallen Irish gentry at the very time when the Land League was assailing them, and when eminent English politicians were already inviting the support of the leaders of the League. Writing in the year 1882 in the January number of the *Contemporary Review*, Professor Mahaffy told a painful tale of the pass to which the landlord class had descended in the three-quarters of a century since last the Lords and Commons met for legislation in the Irish capital. There was degeneration on every hand. The gentry had not in them the power of civic exertion. The manor houses were empty of libraries. They had no ambition except about something connected with a rod or a gun. Professor Mahaffy was specially struck and horrorstruck with the intellectual decay of the declassed race—the race which had produced Goldsmith and Burke, Grattan and Flood, Bushe and Saurin. Here are his sorrowful words, whose sorrow does credit to the man of culture and the lover of Ireland :—

Alas, instead of improving, it is a melancholy fact that the education of the country gentleman is rapidly disappearing. . . . It is a common thing in Ireland for the sons of respectable parents to learn nothing till they are twelve years old ; then they are sent to school and expected to know enough at sixteen. . . .

Every sort of excuse is adopted to delay the boy's going to school. . . . Hasn't he time enough? . . . He hasn't to earn his bread like poor people. . . . What good are books?

We may imagine, we need not imagine, because we know, what was the lot of those loutish, ignorant generations when exposed to the savage raillery, the contemptuous denunciations, of the League orators, men full of brilliant intelligence, full of devouring activity, well knowing and thoroughly despising the fallen, fallen gentry of Protestant Ireland. After all, the Conservative classes who were assailed by the League formed more than the fourth of the Irish population—including all who were directly hostile to Parnellism, certainly more. They possessed wealth, the practice of weapons, the possession of the caste spirit. What did they do? They simply laid down and bellowed. They had lost not courage, not physical power, not intellectual capacity, however undeveloped. What they lacked was the spirit of patriotism and the habit of public administration and ambition, honourable ambition. Mr. Pitt had made them hangers-on of England, and here was the result.

I have nothing but good wishes for the fair and venerable University of Dublin, whose ancient halls and courts are dear to the lover of culture and country, and which, I trust, is entering, with renewed youth, like the eagle of Milton, on a greater continuation of its great career. But it is impossible not to recognise in the spirit of deep, earnest, honourable but narrow loyalty to King and Empire, as it conceived them, the key to much of the ruin which fell upon the proper clientage of the University of Dublin. Trinity, though honourably hospitable to many Catholics, accepted too readily the London-originated part of university of a sect and a garrison—I utter the terms in explanation merely and not in the slightest contumely—and when it had added the Act of Union as the complement of the Thirty-Nine Articles, it dug the grave of the gallant aristocracy which drew its chiefs and examples from the schools of Trinity. How Trinity missed its destiny!

At a time when Church and State on the Catholic side had combined to exclude the laity from Maynooth, both education and endowment ; when the thirty poor little entrance scholarships in the Queen's Colleges for all Ireland exhausted the sum of England's concern for the higher education of popular Ireland ; Trinity remained closed to every Irish lad who had not a fairly garnished purse. If an appeal to Irish landed property had endowed Trinity with two hundred scholarships for poorer students of the popular masses—granting every guarantee for religious freedom—the general elevation of the public intellect would have prevented the reign of many an impostor and taught the kindly faith of common patriotism to Protestant and Catholic throughout the land. Unfortunately Trinity remained *porta clausa* to the nation and a recognised stepping-stone to the salaried situations of official loyalty. We could have been won by a Protestant College which connected itself with learning alone ; but that endless panorama of budding, blatant, and retired solicitors-general and attorneys-general—who had been raised by Trinity votes to be mouthpieces of London incapacity before ascending or descending to the judicial reward ; that unacademic nightmare of parasites on Pegasus, was a sad spectacle for the enthusiasts of a nobler time.

Professor Mahaffy expresses a noble regret for the unlettered condition of the country gentry. Who were the only teachers and guides, besides the regular hacks of Dublin Castle, who formed the views and informed the consciences of all those decadent squires and squiressees ? The Protestant clergy educated in Trinity. I have known the high virtues and graceful or profound culture of many of the rectors and curates from the old foundation of Elizabeth. I have met reverend gentlemen from Trinity, overseas from Ireland. My esteem for their learning and piety renders more acute the sentiment of pain at their lost opportunities among their own class and their own spiritual charge. No voice of enlightened pastors was heard to bid the fallen caste 'Remember,' or even 'Look before !' I admit

quite fairly that it required no ordinary self-control to think of wise policy or a common country in face of such perfidy and such provocation as the robbery of the Protestant Church. But why blame the Catholic Irish? It was an English Cabinet, it was English majorities, which reft the guaranteed rights and possessions from their owners and usufructuaries. The Catholic clergy, unused to broader considerations, welcomed a victory in the affront to a rival creed; but it was English political considerations alone which disestablished and disendowed. Yet how few were the clergymen of Trinity who turned to Ireland, like the Rev. Dr. Galbraith, and invoked the protection of national comradeship, instead of the treacherous support of non-Irish calculators of political chances. Nothing but that sense of a common cause and a common country could have stimulated the torpid gentlemen of property to the robust activity and the cool intelligence which might still dominate the situation. If the Irish gentry had descended boldly into the public arena of Ireland, had proclaimed, along with their ancient loyalty to the Crown, the loyalty of their grandsires to Ireland, is it bagmen in sedition from any shore who could have driven the heirs of Grattan and Charlemont from their place in the front rank of their countrymen? And what was gained from England by the belated superdevotion to what were called the interests of England? Listen to the roar of mocking laughter which goes up from three hundred English representatives as the member for Armagh or the member for the University of Dublin endeavours to maintain the claim of an Irishman, although a landowner, to possess and enjoy proprietorial rights that are contained in Magna Charta. The shadow for which Protestant Ireland has sacrificed the substance of patriotism and power is growing too unsubstantial to be ranked even among shadows. But what ruin Mr. Pitt's Act of Union had worked among the Irish Union garrison on the very eve of the coming of the Land League!

CHAPTER XVI

WITH £100,000 CONTRIBUTED BY IRISH AMERICA PARNELL
ATTACKS HIS HOME RULE COLLEAGUES AND DISRUPTS
THE HOME RULE PARTY—THE HISTORICAL HOME
RULERS OF GRATTAN AND BUTT—THE AGRARIAN
PROLETARIANS OF THE LAND LEAGUE AND THE *IRISH*
WORLD FUND

The Session of 1880—The Parliamentary Development of the Land League—The Collections and the Constituencies—The Irish-American Dollar and the British Electoral Law—Practical Impossibility of Free Elections—The General Election in Britain—The Home Rule Confederation and the Beaconsfield Manifesto—The Farmers' Alliance—Parnell attacks the Home Rule Party—Avowed Revolution and Intended Compromise—Undeception of the Fenians—The Favourite Lieutenants—Parnell makes Russell an M.P.

UNLESS the reader has carefully considered the account in the preceding chapter concerning the general demoralisation of the propertied class in Ireland, he will find it difficult to understand the facility with which doctrines so crude and irrational as the Land League versions of agrarian Socialism acquired force in Ireland and provoked the least effectual measures of repression from the British Government. Unless the reader reflects on another feature of the situation—a feature entirely due to British legislation—it will be absolutely impossible for him to understand the considerable success of the Parnellite candidates at the General Election of 1880 and their sweeping triumph at the General Election of 1885 after the mobocratic reforms of the new Electoral Act which preceded the dissolution of 1880. Mobocracy is a mongrel term, but democracy is an entire misnomer for systems and practices which are more fatal in the case of a democratic constitution than in monarchies or oligarchies. Parnellism was essentially mob rule, excited rather than

tempered by a sort of spurious Cæsar, who was usually content to wink at everything which did not challenge his personal parade of indispensability and autocracy. The net result of the General Election of 1880 as regards the history of Irish Parliamentaryism was the election, after much manoeuvring, of Mr. Parnell as sessional chairman of the Irish party, or members from Ireland, in the Imperial Parliament; an election effected by considerably less than half the members of the party, and by less than one-fourth of the total representative body for Ireland. It was this exiguous minority of the Irish representation which was taken by the Gladstone Cabinet from the outset as the real Home Rulers—though Land Leaguism repudiated the Home Rule platform and Home Rule name—while the members who remained faithful to the programme of Mr. Isaac Butt were described by the new Premier himself as ‘nominal Home Rulers’; so adroit is British statesmanship in the non-perception of the most palpable facts of Irish politics. Mr. Parnell’s party had been elected on the New Departure ticket enunciated by Mr. John Devoy a twelvemonth before, which had carefully substituted the vague but significant expression ‘self-government’ for the explicit recognition of Imperial connexion and a common Crown in the programme of the Home Rule Conference which created the Home Rule party. Mr. Parnell himself was to take Mr. Devoy’s dream of an independent republic with about as much seriousness as Mr. Butt’s federal monarchy. Confident in his own conviction, as well as the conviction of statesmen like Mr. Matthew Harris, that ‘a bit of a county gentleman’ was indispensable and irremovable, Mr. Parnell was amiably indifferent to the particular variety of unimportant nomenclature under which he received the sinews of war and the rewards of dexterity. If ‘severing the last link’ was demanded by the Fenians of Chicago, then ‘severing the last link’ let it be. If Mr. Gladstone could not promise more than ‘a subordinate legislature,’ and the contemporary wind seemed to blow in this direction, Mr.

Parnell was politely prepared to accept Mr. Gladstone's boon; which, in any case, would mean for the Parnellite leader and counsellors, in Mr. Healy's familiar but comprehensive recommendation, the handling of '£3,000,000 a year.'¹ A great deal of vague nomenclature seemed excusable by that result. Unfortunately, the process which was to lead to Mr. Devoy's or Mr. Gladstone's solution was a terrible business for Ireland. Meantime, pending the arrival of the date when he might be authorised to levy and share the Queen's taxes, Mr. Parnell was entirely aware that the Irish-American dollar was absolutely necessary for the subjugation of the Irish constituencies; and on the quest of the Irish-American dollar he had quitted the Irish shores previous to the general election.

I am now about to deliver a brief exposition of the British electoral law as operative upon the Irish electoral system, which has never been anticipated by the profoundest British intelligences wrestling with the problems involved in the application of the incompetent to the unknown in the British Government of Ireland. In the first place, it is hardly betraying a secret if I observe that the British laws on the expenses of elections and the trial of election petitions in England contemplate very distinctly the presence of candidates of a certain wealth of purse as a general feature of British appeals to the electorate. When all the expenses, official as well as the rest, in the matter of contested elections must be paid by the private competitors for electoral favour, the choice of possible candidates is necessarily intended to be influenced by the possession of sufficient wealth to bear such demands on a private purse. It is a broad intimation of the traditional spirit of the British Constitution: No have-nots invited. When, in addition, the justice of the State will not even look at a

¹ A sub-inspector of Irish constabulary, who had been cashiered for over-sympathy with the Land League, used rather to bore the Parnellite members by pleas and petitions for compensation. One day, at the time of Mr. Gladstone's first Home Rule Bill, Mr. Healy was reported to have endeavoured to comfort and silence the persistent complainant with the expostulation: 'Whisht, man, whisht! Can't you wait? Before twelve months we'll be handling three millions a year. Wait for that.'

plaint of corruption, intimidation, or other undue practice at an election, unless the complainant has previously deposited £1000 in Court, or obtained security for a similar amount, it is increasingly clear that the British Constitution contemplated contests of candidates to whom deposits of £1000 were no prohibitory bar to the bringing of an election petition. But Great Britain is a country of very many rich individuals, and both the orthodox parties have rarely found any difficulty in producing parliamentary candidates with good accounts at their bankers as well as with the loftiest principles of unselfish patriotism. But the institutions of rich countries when transported to poor countries may suffer more than a sea-change. They may produce results absolutely different from their traditional working in their traditional habitat.

Though the all-important matter to which I am drawing attention has never been even mentioned by any British statesman, politician, editor, or journalist, it is the very core and essence of all that is most wrong and false in what is called the parliamentary representation of Ireland. Let us consider how the British electoral law, on the points to which I have referred, actually works in certain familiar circumstances in the Irish constituencies. In a constituency called A. there are two candidates. The one is a private gentleman of the highest character and the most moderate wealth. He is opposed by a man of no means whatever, an absolute pauper, but supported by an organisation which has received, like the Land League, £50,000 or £60,000 for the purpose of influencing elections in Ireland. The contest is severe. It is violently intimidatory and unblushingly corrupt on the side of the pauper nominee of the wealthy organisation. Pretty nearly every crime known to the judges of election petitions is committed against the partisans of the independent and honourable candidate. As a result, the pauper nominee, a practically hired servant, of the subsidised and subsidising League is returned by a majority of few or many hundreds of votes. What are the results? The first result is, that a hired tool of a

wealthy organisation has come in by force of corruption and violence, and the honourable patriot has been rejected. A second result is that the man of moderate means has expended in vain a sum of £1000 or £1200—to him a very heavy loss—in the effort to oppose violent dictation and intimidation. At the same time, the hired pauper has not lost a penny; first, for the reason that the breeks cannot be stripped off a hielandman; and secondly, because the whole of the election expenses, both the avowed and the unavowed in his behalf, have been paid by the organisation which possesses funds to dominate the Irish constituencies. But the question of the criminal malpractices which carried the election remain. Beyond doubt—let us assume—the election of the hired pauper will be quashed if the case come before the election judges. But there can be no election petition, no matter what the malpractices. Before the justice of the State will even look at the complaint, the complainant must pay into court £1000, or obtain solvent security for the payment. Into the bargain, as the elected hired pauper has no property beyond the paper collar and shoddy he stands up in, even if the crime be proved, the successful petitioner will never receive a farthing of his costs. The hired pauper, worked and financed by the rich League, becomes the crowning guarantee of the League's invincibility. Whoever opposes him must first lose £1000 in the electoral contest, and then must pay another £1000 as preliminary guarantee payable into the court; and then must pay all the expenses of counsel and witnesses; with the final result that the hired pauper can under no circumstances suffer the loss of a £10 note. The independent candidate will have lost his election expenses, his petition expenses, and be crippled very possibly by such losses from succeeding either in public or private life. What is done in one constituency can be done in twenty, in eighty. England can perhaps produce an inexhaustible supply of rich candidates who can fight tactics of this description. Ireland is prevented by general poverty from finding any candidates at all, as a rule, who can bear the expense of

contesting parliamentary seats against the men-of-straw who are elected and supported by the funds of the subsidised association. In these circumstances consulting the constituencies becomes a farce and a mockery. Thanks to the British electoral law, transported from a wealthy to a necessitous country, the parliamentary elections for Ireland have been, and must be—so long as the League has funds—a farce and a mockery. Private men of moderate means cannot afford to fight the hired nominees of an organisation which collects dollars from New York to San Francisco.

I had the most intimate personal knowledge of a case of unsurpassable electoral malpractices in which Mr. Parnell was concerned, and for which, indeed, Mr. Parnell was responsible. It was the case of Mr. Callan's contest of a Louth constituency in 1885. Mr. Callan was a Buttite Home Ruler, and Mr. Parnell, then in the full flush of his negotiations with English parties, determined to chase him from parliamentary life. Callan was extremely popular in Louth, so Parnell had to command the invasion in person. An army of agents of corruption and menace poured into the County Louth. After scenes of reckless contempt for law and equity, Parnell's nominee was declared to be elected. Callan prepared to present a petition against the election. A man of slender means, he relied on a wealthy friend, a barrister and professor of distinguished attainments, for the security for the £1000. The friend became security. The election trial was fixed. Suddenly the surety died a couple of weeks before the trial. It was impossible to replace him. 'To fight the League' was too formidable a task for private exchequers. The State declared that it had no interest in purity of election unless quite certain of £1000. That is all that British electoral law minds or heeds the crime which goes to the very root of the Constitution! The State will spend many thousands sterling, if necessary, to track a cutpurse on Ludgate Hill. The vilest travesty of free election may be perpetrated in fifty constituencies, and the State will outrival Gallio in taking no heed of such

things—unless a private complainant produce £1000. Once establish such a combination as the Land League in Ireland with ample command of hired paupers and American dollars, and it becomes worth no man's while to fling his private purse in fruitless challenge to the inexhaustible treasury of a cosmopolitan subscription list. So long as private purses have to pay for the cost of elections, and so long as private candidates can be opposed with coin collected in forty states of the American Union, so long also will the parliamentary representation of Ireland remain the almost mechanical result of outside manipulation. The hired pauper and the invalid election: these have been the bases of parliamentary Parnellism and its progeny for thirty years.

When we reflect that the landed class were in the useless plight already described, and that no man of common sense would contest a seat against incarnate corruption and intimidation—facilitated or created by the British electoral law itself in Ireland—the phrase of 'the Irish Tammany' becomes almost a feeble image of what has occurred in the counties and boroughs of Ireland ever since Parnell came back from America at the beginning of 1880 with the first great instalment of the Irish-American dollars, henceforth the dominant influence in the making of members from the sister island. I remember the bitter jest of a Dublin head-waiter, with whom I had a most friendly acquaintance of many years' standing. An election of some importance was pending, and I said to my friend, as I waited for the breakfast bacon and eggs: 'Well, Michael, who is going to be the new member?'—'Sure, that's settled. You can make your mind easy about that, sir.' 'How settled?'—'Settled I said, and settled it is. Look here, Mr. O'Donnell! You see them four legs of that chair before you. Well, if there was four elections in four quarters, north, south, east, and west of Ireland; and if the lads up there'—giving a comprehensive indication in the direction of the League offices—'just sint down the four legs of that very chair to the four elections, the four legs would come

back four M.P.'s before the week was out. Sure, that's how it's always settled.'

The year 1880 was to be a double-session year: the last session of the Parliament of 1874, and the opening session of its successor. There was no visible symptom of its approaching doom when the Parliament met on February 5. The matter of the Speech from the Throne was singularly unimportant, and, in view of the great and increasing distress in Ireland, deserved a harsher title. One reference to a matter of foreign, or—as England still believed it to be—colonial affairs, had a special interest for me personally, especially in connexion with private information of my own. It was the congratulatory mention of the successful termination the preceding year of the operations against the Zulus and the captivity of their formidable king. The Speech went on, accordingly, to express great satisfaction at 'the Transvaal being freed from the depredations of a powerful chief,' and the confident expectations of her Majesty's Government that this happy event could shortly be followed by the extension of constitutional rule to the conquered Republic, now a British colony. I had received plenty of information from my Dutch correspondents that the Transvaal Boers would not stir so long as 'Cetewayo, Carnarvon's bully,' might be let loose upon their people; and I remembered the fierce joy in the eyes of President Kruger four years before, when I promised him the sure and certain outbreak of hostilities between the British and their Zulu ally of 1877. The Zulu had now been crushed at Ulundi, and the Four-colour of the indomitable Republicans was approaching the steep slopes of Majuba Hill. But her Majesty's Government never thought of consulting me on the future of their Colonial Empire.

Sir Stafford Northcote admitted that the Irish distress was extremely serious. His statistics were still more serious than his statement. There was a deficiency in the yield of the crops in Ireland, as compared with the previous year, of £10,000,000, of which sum no less than £6,000,000

represented the failure of the potato. The Government only proposed some loans, small in proportion to the emergency, and payable out of an Irish fund, the so-called surplus from the disendowment of the Protestant Church established under the most solemn guarantees by the Act of Union. As I have already observed, the plunder of the Protestant Church was to be made the excuse for paying out of Irish money a long number of claims which belonged to the responsible administration of the country. It was, over again, the old game of making Irish poverty feed Irish poverty. The Government hesitated even about saying how much they were going to apply to relief at all. The excellent Mr. W. H. Smith was put up to explain that 'The Government were precluded from making known prematurely the full extent of the precautions they were taking, lest the needy should be prevented from trying to help themselves.' The Government were afraid the Irish were going to starve themselves in order to try and diddle the kind-hearted Englishman—who was simply dying to help them out of their own money! It appears from the *Annual Register* that my protest was somewhat vivid, for we are told that 'Mr. O'Donnell went so far as to declare that the measures taken and proposed by the Government were worthless and an insult to humanity, but few other members, though they used impassioned language, went so far as this.' It is added, however, that 'Mr. Shaw and his followers did maintain that the distress was much more serious than the Government seemed to suppose, and that the measures of relief proposed were inadequate and ought to have been put in operation long before.' Mr. Shaw, indeed, pressed the situation of the Irish tenantry on the House with masterly proofs and arguments, being admirably supported by the Mayor of Dublin, Mr. Maurice Brooks, in particular, who was chairman of a relief fund, and had harrowing experiences to relate. Mr. Shaw's amendment to the Address not only expressed regret at the inadequacy of the measures professing to relieve the actual distress, but also raised the whole question of the necessary land

reform, declaring that it was 'essential to the peace and prosperity of Ireland to legislate at once in a comprehensive manner on those questions which affect the tenure of land in Ireland.' While Parnell was starring in America, Shaw was doing the work of a true leader in the responsible Parliament. Mr. Shaw's amendment was rejected by nearly four votes to one. In return for Mr. Shaw's able service to the country, Mr. Parnell, who had only come into politics on my opposition to the South Africa Bill, tried to oust him from the County Cork with the aid of the American dollar, and afterwards got his place as sessional chairman ! It appears that I incurred again the censure of respectable Englishmen, for it is recorded with pain that 'Mr. O'Donnell made an ineffectual attempt, supported by sixteen members, to append to the Address a violent denunciation of the Government for their neglect of Ireland.' When one compares all this mean stinginess with the reckless profusion of later benefactions, one is simply astounded at the British qualification for Irish government.

The General Election of 1880 came suddenly upon the country. It was supposed with good reason that its happening just then was due to a mistaken estimate by the Beaconsfield Cabinet of the significance of an election at Southwark, which had resulted in a striking Conservative victory. 'We must be very popular altogether, when Southwark, that Radical hole, goes for us. Let us strike while the iron is hot, and get elected for another half-dozen years.' But the Southwark victory had had very little to do with Conservative merits or demerits, but with local and transient circumstances. At any rate, Lord Beaconsfield dissolved, and published a manifesto full of alarm and menace on the subject of Ireland. The Home Rule Confederation, powerful or influential in fifty British boroughs with Irish residential populations, was evidently called to play a weighty and perhaps a decisive part in the great arbitrament which was now before the Empire. I had avoided the meetings of its executive ever since Parnell had engineered Mr. Butt out of its presidency. I resolved

now to resume my share in its direction, and as vice-president, in the absence of Mr. Parnell in America, I determined to alter the habitual tactics of the Confederation, and to reply to the Beaconsfield declaration of war on Ireland by a declaration of war without quarter against the Conservative party. The habitual policy of the Confederation had been, ever since its foundation seven years previously, to present the Home Rule demand to every candidate, Conservative and Liberal, in a British constituency, and to vote for Conservative or Liberal in the constituency without regard to the question of Conservatism or Liberalism elsewhere. If a Liberal at A. voted Home Rule, we supported the Liberal at A. If a Conservative at B. accepted Home Rule, we supported the Conservative at B. I changed this system at once, and for this general election only. Calling an urgency meeting of the executive, I expressed my conviction that we could only punish Lord Beaconsfield by throwing our weight against all his supporters, wherever we could meet them, without any regard to their individual position in reference to Home Rule. A Conservative might be as favourable to Home Rule as possible, and his Liberal opponent might be against Home Rule, my advice was to vote against Lord Beaconsfield's supporter, 'though he were a Fenian into the bargain.' There was much opposition, as might be expected, from some of our most respected members, but finally a large majority of the executive recognised the expediency of my proposal in order to strike down a Premier 'who had presumed to denounce Irish nationhood as a kindred curse to pestilence or famine.' It was my quotation of the worst phrase in the Premier's manifesto-letter to the Duke of Marlborough, then Lord-Lieutenant in Ireland, which swept away the last hesitations of the Confederation Executive. Lord Beaconsfield had characterised the Home Rule movement as 'a danger in its ultimate results scarcely less disastrous than pestilence or famine,' and this offensive language had been addressed to the British functionary, whose viceregal position still attested the sovereign rights

of the Irish nation. I received full authority to reply to the Beaconsfield menace, and I wrote the counter-manifesto of the Home Rule Confederation with my own hand from end to end. I called upon all Irishmen 'to oppose the minister whose policy towards our country is summed up in coercion codes, and who would jest at the starvation of the Western tenantry amid the toasts and feastings of the London Guildhall.' Having summarised with indignant emphasis the slights and refusals with which the Home Rule party had been met at every turn and on every occasion by the Cabinet, I concluded with the direction how to vote. That was the business end of our manifesto. 'Anybody except a Tory,' was the watchword. 'In presence of the atrocious and criminal manœuvre which has now been attempted, the duty is doubly imperative. Vote against Benjamin Disraeli as you should vote against the mortal enemy of your country and your race.' The effect of our intervention was something to remember even in a time of incipient revolutions. The Liberals could hardly believe their eyes.¹ The Irish, almost everywhere, rose to the call, like soldiers at the word to charge. Some hesitation was announced from Lancashire and Yorkshire, where the new policy of voting for anti-Home Rule Liberals in preference to pro-Home Rule Conservatives excited a few murmurs, accentuated by the natural leanings of many Catholic priests

¹ The *Annual Register* for 1881, at p. 54 of its 'English History' for the year, gives a very fair and accurate description of the surprising effect of my total alteration of the usual tactics pursued by the Home Rule Confederation at English and Scotch elections. It was, indeed, unexpected, which the strategists tell us ought to be a characteristic of decisive operations. 'Lord Beaconsfield's manifesto had an unexpected effect upon the Irish vote. A counter-manifesto was at once drawn up by the Home Rule Confederation, calling upon all Irishmen to oppose the Minister. . . . No pledges were to be asked of Liberals on the hustings; the plain instruction was given to vote in every case against the Conservative candidate. The result was, that the Liberal party, although its leaders held the most uncompromising language on the subject of Home Rule, *had the solid Irish vote secured for them.*'

It is amusing to relate that as the Parnellites could not claim this strategy for their 'bit of a county gentleman'—he being out of the country—they have hushed it up altogether. But 150,000 Irish voters in England and Scotland 'voted in every case against the Conservative candidate.' It was my last exertion of authority as vice-president of the Home Rule Confederation.

towards a side which, in their view, was more favourable to Christian education.

In consequence of this hesitation, I was asked by the executive to represent the Confederation in Lancashire and Yorkshire as vice-president and acting president. I began with Liverpool. An immense meeting, comprising delegates from branches, and often entire branches, from all the towns, swarming with Irish workmen, within fifty and a hundred miles of Liverpool, met to hear my message, and to vote ' War without quarter ' with grim enthusiasm. The Liverpool Liberals crowded also to cheer and thank the envoy of the Confederation. I received the warmest invitations to a score of Liberal houses, but I was carrying the fiery cross through Lancashire and Yorkshire, and I hastened from Liverpool to the toiling multitudes of Wigan. I addressed four and five meetings in a day. A delegation from the Liverpool Home Rule Association accompanied me to Leeds, where the representatives of the Yorkshire branches of the Confederation were to meet in conference. At Leeds I addressed an enormous meeting of Irish electors and non-electors in support of the candidature of Mr. Herbert Gladstone, and impressed upon my audience that, in addition to the friendly attitude of Mr. Herbert Gladstone, there rested upon all of them the supreme duty of defeating the supporters of Lord Beaconsfield wherever they were to be found. Mr. Herbert Gladstone was elected by a satisfactory majority. Meantime, having discharged the mission of the Confederation and seen the whole of our strategic movement in operation, I travelled as fast as possible, and barely in time, to the south of Ireland to defend my own constituency. My opponent in Ireland was again Mr. Henry Matthews, now Lord Llandaff; but after a strenuous contest—Mr. Matthews was a formidable and attractive opponent—I was returned again to Parliament. It was my third election for an Irish constituency since 1874. I came back to London by way of Dublin as usual, and found in Dublin a disagreeable situation. Even while in bed on the morning after my arrival, a violent knocking

came to my bedroom door, and a deputation from the Land League interviewed me on my pillow. 'We are sent to ask you to go down to Cork to help Parnell to beat Colonel Colthurst.' 'To beat Colonel Colthurst! Why, the Colonel is a good Home Ruler.' 'He is no Land Leaguer. He is a landlord, and a landlord's man. We are going to hunt all his kind.' 'Do you want to drive the landlords into England's arms? What becomes of all the Home Rulers who are landlords?' 'Mr. O'Donnell, we tell you plainly, all that is over. Will you help Parnell?' 'I found Colonel Colthurst a straight supporter of Home Rule and a straight Home Ruler. You can tell Parnell that he is doing bad work for Ireland, and he can look for help elsewhere. He gets no help from me for faction and nation-splitting.' 'Is that your last word?' 'Dear no! I mean to say a lot before I come to the last. But I remain with Butt and Shaw.' 'We'll drive out Shaw and Colthurst together.' The deputation retired with some not obscure intimations that I was far advanced on the way of treason to the cause, or words to that effect; and I fell asleep until nearly eleven o'clock. Slumber was pleasant after the hot time of electioneering in County Waterford. Parnell did not drive out Shaw and Colthurst that time. Shaw was the chairman of the party since Butt's death, and I saw plainly that Parnellism meant ruin to Irish union and co-operation.

When I returned to London I found a pile of letters awaiting me from all parts of Ireland and some parts of England and Scotland, which could not reach me during the month I had spent in electioneering for the Liberals, or rather against the Conservatives, in Lancashire and Yorkshire, and for my *ain sel* in County Waterford. The news was uniformly bad, far worse than I had anticipated, even after the sinister awakening by that Land League deputation. The tocsin of civil hate was sounding from all platforms of the Parnellite League; and sheer agrarian Socialism, combined with wild defiance of existing institutions, was being preached throughout the land to the accompanying chink of the remittances from America, and

the knowing wink with the boast : ' We have hundreds of thousands of pounds, millions if we want them, at the back of the Land League.' The jumble of ideas was amazing. England was to be forced to abolish landlordism, and landlordism was to be abolished in order to abolish England. The British Parliament was the lowest and most worthless of existing or non-existing things, and it was expected, at the same time, to pass the new and perfect Land Laws which were to make Ireland happy for evermore ! Then, as soon as the British Parliament had given the lands of the landlords to the people—people apparently meaning that everybody was to squat as he chose and where he chose—as soon as the British Parliament had done this, then by way of thanks and gratitude, I suppose, ' Parnell and his true nationalists ' were to ' block all business until Ireland got self-government ! ' Take equal parts of rant, ignorance, stark greed and mere malediction, the simplicity of the peasant who had never looked beyond his village, semi-pious talk about holy Ireland, the social philosophy of the late Citizen Marat : the concoction would be very like the average outpouring from the platforms of the League. Trace of Home Rule or the capacity for Home Rule there was none.

I had never realised that anything so abjectly crude was anywhere in contemplation. I had written the previous August to a conference in Dublin urging more vigorous support for tenant right. Here was no right for anybody, but sheer disorder and a sort of programme of anarchy. The advent of such an apparition in the field of Irish reform was all the more deplorable, because the situation in Ireland, due to sheer badness of laws and badness of government, was grave and intolerable ; while the general sentiment of the country had been exasperated by the mixture of trifling, inaction, and sheer insolence which composed the policy of the late Cabinet towards Ireland. The need of reforms was sufficiently urgent, and required no complication by a further demand that reforms should be granted for the mere purpose of overthrowing both English rule and the

whole fabric of Irish society. If all land belonged to the people at large, according to Mr. Davitt and his followers, what guarantee had the Irish farmer that his share of it, after having been rescued from the landlord, might not be claimed for redistribution among a whole community of new claimants? Compensation for disturbance we knew, and payment for improvements we knew, and fixity of tenure at fair rents we knew; but who could possibly know the upshot of 'dividing the land among the people'? How on earth were we to make our arguments more persuasive to Englishmen by assuring them that we only worked for reforms in order to hasten independence; and what sort of security was to be expected under Irish self-government, if the whole class of owners of land, good, bad or better, were assured of outlawry and confiscation as an initial specimen of the meaning of Ireland for the Irish? Parnellism was already creating that temper of the British mind which was to ensure the long return of Toryism and 'resolute government' to power in Downing Street and Dublin Castle.

I had been feverishly anxious to get back to London, because, if Home Rule was my national duty, the Farmers' Alliance was my peculiar invention, and I wanted to see if I had emptied, indeed, the Tory saddles in the English counties; and if so, how many. Of course, the boroughs had voted first. I had no doubt that the opposition of the Irish to Conservative candidates would influence many English electors also to follow their example. In the management of the Home Rule Confederation, I had very often noted that, where nothing had occurred to rouse an anti-Irish spirit, the English working-classes—as they are to-day—were extremely well disposed towards their Irish workfellows. The Irish, besides, were influential in trade unions and political societies. I had not been surprised, accordingly, to hear that in all the larger towns the elections were going with a rush against Lord Beaconsfield. But I waited for the counties. Would the counties follow the squires or would the counties follow the Farmers' Alliance?

I was still far from London when the first telegram from an old comrade in politics and journalism, my dear and valued friend, Mr. Baker Greene, came with the news: 'Your farmers are sweeping the counties.' It was true. To the amazement of Tories and Liberals alike, the counties gave as many victories as the boroughs to the Liberal party. At the close of the contest the Liberals were 350, the Tories were only 242, and the nominal total of Home Rule members was sixty; but more than a third of the sixty were Land Leaguers and had declared war upon the Home Rule party. The *Annual Register* for the year gives prominence to the name of the Farmers' Alliance in recording the results of the appeal to the constituencies. It may be worth while to chronicle this testimony of an impartial witness:—

In spite of their unexpected triumph in the boroughs, the Liberals hardly ventured to hope that in the counties they would do more than hold their own. The result of the county elections was a new surprise. . . . The Farmers' Alliance was supposed to have been influential in the revolt of the counties.

The Farmers' Alliance which I had founded, and financed in its opening stages, whose programme I had carefully graduated so as to attract the farmers and to repel the landowners, whose first public meeting had been judiciously padded with 300 Irish farmers whom I had borrowed from the Irish Tenant-Right Association! Added to my plan of flinging the electors of the Confederation at the Tories, without troubling the Liberals with Home Rule pledges, was it not natural to claim that the intervention of the Farmers' Alliance as well, and in the same direction, had no slight nor indirect effect in determining the fall of the Beaconsfield Ministry? I had secured, in all probability, a friendly House of Commons for the consideration of Irish reforms. Not for Home Rule, though. Parnell had indefinitely postponed the very chance of Home Rule; for discord and mutiny within the party rendered it useless to speak to Englishmen about restoring self-government to Ireland, even if the additional impediment of social anarchy and revolution had not been superposed by the Land

League agitation to the national crimes of discord and mutiny. Never more, in our days at least, should we see a leader arise like Isaac Butt, who, like Isaac Butt, could say to the hostile House at Westminster : ' Home Rule represents the patriotic union of all classes and creeds among Irishmen ; landlord and tenant ; artisan and merchant ; townsman and villager. Home Rule is the proclamation to the world that Irishmen are comrades, and that discord ceases within the bond of native land.' Messrs. Davitt and Parnell, Egan and Ford, had split Ireland into hostile camps again ; and the sordid watchwords of class spoliation and class greed had been substituted for the patriotism which brought together the Colthursts and King Harmans with the Lalors and the Sullivans, the landowners with the tillers of the soil. I felt this at that time, and I write this deliberately now, in spite of, and because of, the circumstance that what the Parnellites were pleased to call Home Rule was to be introduced by Mr. Gladstone. The measures introduced by Mr. Gladstone, well intended as they were by a statesman who had learned to appreciate the Act of Union, were not the Irish Parliament, nor could ever develop into the Irish Parliament. The explanation of Mr. Gladstone's measures will be later. At present it is enough to note that a House of Commons friendly to Irish reforms, if hostile to Irish Parliamentaryism, had been secured ; that the Beaconsfield Cabinet, which had insulted our rights with similitudes of famine and pest, was fallen in the dust ; and, be it added, that Mr. Parnell had not contributed the weight of one ounce towards the effort which had returned the Tory Ministry to unofficial life for a season. Mr. Parnell had been collecting dollars in America, and he had just been expending a portion of them on subsidising faction and passion in Ireland. It is time to examine and estimate the work which Mr. Parnell had done, or assisted, between Cork and Chicago. I have judged it best to complete the account of the overthrow of Lord Beaconsfield's policy before dealing at some length with the calamitous Irishman who overthrew Home Rule.

The announcement of Lord Beaconsfield's intention to dissolve Parliament reached America on March 9, and Mr. Parnell, who in company with Mr. John Dillon had been collecting money for the Land League throughout the states of the union, cut short his tour, and embarked for Ireland, landing in Ireland on March 21. He had been in America since the close of 1879. He and Mr. John Dillon had been requested, by the Foundation Convention of the Land League on August 21, to proceed to America for the purpose of collecting money for the new movement. It was not yet generally understood, in fact it was generally unknown, that the new movement was hostile to the Home Rule party, and that it would use the American money to break up the Home Rule party as well as to return its own followers to the Imperial Parliament and to establish its own branches throughout the country. Mr. Parnell, except to the initiates and intimates of his real design, was simply a gifted and patriotic member of the Home Rule party, who sought to combine all Irishmen in a more vigorous support of the Home Rule programme, who would demand extensive reforms of the Land Laws, but whose supreme object was understood to be at least the legislative independence of Ireland. Broadly speaking, he represented the New Departure outlined by Mr. John Devoy, one of the most strenuous and able leaders of the Fenians in America ; but ninety per cent. of the Irish population on both sides of the Atlantic regarded the New Departure, so far as they had heard of it, as merely a strenuous method of promoting Home Rule for Ireland. In presenting himself to Irish-American audiences, Parnell never revealed any intention of attacking his Home Rule colleagues. He made a lot of ultra-patriotic but strictly non-committal speeches to all sorts of Irish meetings and associations. The State and Federal authorities, and all the officials everywhere in American states and cities possessing an Irish population, were full of exuberant courtesies, such as are politically expedient in countries of mixed nationalities. The American Irish themselves displayed all the hospitality and patriotism

of their race, as well as all the paraphernalia of banners and bands, military and militia parades, banquets, receptions, handshakings and interviews, which belong to what may be called the publishing department of American politics. The Irish Americans were distinctly proud of the distinguished-looking young delegates from the folk at home. The increasing gravity of the reports with regard to failure of crops and deepening distress in the west of Ireland awakened poignant memories of the dread visitation half a century before. The Irish political associations of every kind—especially, of course, the associations which professed an intention of promoting military measures for the recovery of Irish independence—were prominent both in the public parades and in the public preparations. There was as much undying hate of foreign tyranny proclaimed by the speakers of meetings in a dozen states of the Union as would equip with heroic resolve all the leading heroes of European patriotism before and since the times of Brutus, Leonidas, Arminius, and Vercingetorix. The Irish in America are a very brave as well as prosperous branch of the Celtic family. They are also very eloquent, and the habitudes of the American Republic favour eloquence. Messrs. Parnell and Dillon were orated, serenaded, torch-light-processioned, handshaken, cheered, and generally made much of by all the most remarkable men of the country. They collected a very great deal of money, and made arrangements for the continuance of the silver stream. Mr. Parnell endeavoured to be as eloquent as nature permitted. He dropped significant hints of the feasibility of restoring the age of Grattan or Brian Boru as soon as the British Government had introduced a measure for transferring the estates of the landowners to a virtuous and valorous peasantry. He intimated that he possessed the secret of bending or blocking the Alien Parliament to his will ; but it would be as easy to place the proverbial pinch of salt on the tail of the elusive sparrow as to discover a distinct policy, or any policy whatever, in the strictly non-committal speeches of Mr. Parnell. The

courageous but cautious agitator was there to accept, and stimulate, the utmost collections of Fenian or any other sort of negotiable currency, but not to take any sort of stock, political or military, in any Fenian march across the ocean, either then or at any other time. Whether the money came to him from the Skirmishing Fund or the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul, Mr. Parnell merely remarked *Non olet*, or some more familiar equivalent expressing that no minted money could be bad money, and banked the contribution. The fancy that the calm and self-centred gentleman, who seldom used a phrase capable of exact definition, ever departed from this practice in America is surely an instance of the play of the imagination in unlikely places. Enthusiasm was not his line of business. He left that to the organisers of Fourths of July and Presidential Elections.

Beyond all doubt the Irish Americans during the Parnell-Dillon progress from Sandy Hook to Washington were having the time of their lives. They are still green, they are evergreen, the memories of the Parnell picnic, as keen and lean-flanked Fenian soldiers loved to call it,—proud and war-scarred veterans who had ridden on Morgan raids and charged in Sheridan rides, and had longed, amid the contention of Grant and Lee, for a coming day when the victorious Republic would exact a toll of vengeance for the Alabama. The victorious Republic had preferred a cheque to a land fight or a sea fight ; and now the old-time troopers lounged along the sidewalks and exchanged camp commentaries on the shouting and bannered parades which followed and preceded a good-looking young man, who had been requested to leave Cambridge University, and who had never done anything, and never would do anything, more risky than dispute a point of order with Mr. Speaker. It was a high old time ! Municipal dignitaries handed on the honoured guest to municipal dignitaries. Every cute politician who wanted an Irish vote elbowed the exultation of the simple-minded ex-peasant from Cork who had a vote to give. Wolfe Tone

Guards relieved Davitt Gallowglasses, and the Dalcassian Knights did the honours in turn after the Sarsfield Brigade. Young ladies presented bouquets, and old officials delivered addresses. I have not heard that anywhere Parnell was osculated by a thousand women. This development had not invaded the daughters of Erin. The Washington Congress conceded the floor of the House to the interesting tourists. In none of his replies did Mr. Parnell mention that his stock of amendments on his first Prisons Bill had been drawn up by Mr. Sheridan Knowles of the *Morning Post*, or that he was stealing, and spoiling, the intervention policy which I had announced in 1873, and which I had carried out, for instance, on South Africa Confederation and in the Farmers' Alliance. Neither did he suggest that within a couple of years he would promise Mr. Gladstone to help to govern Ireland on Liberal principles, in return for being enabled to exchange the patriotic company within Kilmainham for gentler society in an Eltham villa.

Let me give a couple of specimens of the sapient mingling of flapdoodle and prudence which Parnell retailed to his entertaining entertainers. Flapdoodle is defined, I understand, by American professors of the useful art, as 'the stuff they feed fools with.' Assuredly there were very few fools in the normal sense of the term among those interminable masses of vigorous men and comely women; but folly, as Mr. Parnell quickly understood, is a relative expression. In Brooklyn, the bedroom of New York, he explained that the money was wanted regularly for the first blow in the first step in the gradual advance to the successful continuation of an agitation which would last his time at any rate—if it were adequately nourished and remunerated. He looked to the heroic multitudes before him for nourishment and remuneration. He knew that they would prefer to send an armada to Dalkey, but he preferred a cheque.

We do not ask you to send armed expeditions over to Ireland, though I know that you would like to do that very much. But we ask you to help us in preventing the Irish people from

being starved to death. . . . This struggle has gone on for many centuries, and it is bound to go on to the bitter end. The high heart of our country remains unquelled. . . . They are strengthened by the great power of our people in this free land. . . . I feel very confident that the day is very near at hand when we shall have struck the *first* blow, the *first* vital blow, at the land system as it now exists in Ireland, and we shall have taken the *first* step to obtain for Ireland that *right* to nationhood for which she has struggled so long and so well. (Cheers. Bully for you. Great applause.)

So, if the dollars—no armed expeditions, thank you—were forthcoming, ‘the first blow’ was to lead to ‘the first step,’ and the first step was to continue ‘to the bitter end,’ and at the bitter end Ireland was to get, not nationhood, but a ‘right to nationhood,’ which is another sort of business altogether. For a gentleman ‘who preferred deeds to words,’ as his panegyrists used to say, Mr. Parnell was doing very well as a professor of verbal advertising.

At Cleveland, Mr. Parnell turned on the tap of Hibernian valour sufficiently to compliment the gallant purse-bearers present; and concluded, of course, by alleging his continued preference for negotiable securities above pikes or breechloaders.

It has given me great pleasure during my visit to the cities of this country to see the armed regiments of Irishmen who have frequently turned out to escort us; and when I saw some of these gallant men to-day, who are even now in this hall (great cheering), I thought that each one of them must wish, with Sarsfield of old, when dying upon a foreign battlefield, ‘Oh! that I could carry these arms for Ireland.’ Well, it may come to that some day or other. (Repeated cheers.)

Meantime, five dollars in the bag, if you please! The fondest mother in ‘this hall’ knew that her valiant boy was as safe under Parnell’s banner as in his feather bed. But pass round the bag!

An example of the possibly-paullo-post-future beginning-of-the-commencement of Irish independence which is really hard to beat, even by Mr. Parnell, was spoken by the chief

dollar collector at Cincinnati on February 23. The fiery spirits of Cincinnati parade-patriotism were stimulated by thrilling references to a 'foundation,' which was a 'corner-stone,' that was to be a 'pavement,' which was to be constructed by 'undermining,' that was to lead to an 'ultimate goal,' which, when reached, was to snap a 'last link,'—probably towards the middle of the thirtieth century of the Christian era. Mr. Parnell added that his foundation, and corner-stone, and pavement, and undermine was also a 'feudal tenure,' the chief dollar collector being able to distinguish feudalism from absolute ownership—which happened to exist in Ireland—just as accurately as he could Savonarola from Julian the Apostate. He said :—

When we have given Ireland to the people of Ireland, we shall have laid the foundation upon which to build up our Irish nation. The feudal tenure and the rule of the minority have been the corner-stone of English misrule. . . . When we have undermined English misgovernment we have paved the way for Ireland to take her place among the nations of the earth. And let us not forget that that is the ultimate goal at which all we Irishmen aim. . . . None of us will be satisfied until we have destroyed the last link which keeps Ireland bound to England.

This hotch-potch of mixed metaphors and Greek-Kalends-insurrection had the best possible effect, I mean the most fruitful result. Far nicer than pikeheads, the dollars piled up. In a letter of simple dignity to Mr. Patrick Egan on March 1, Parnell poured out his heart.

The enthusiasm increases in volume. . . . The meetings which we address, although high admission charge is made, are packed from floor to roof. . . . In two months we visited sixty-two different cities. . . . The net result of these sixty-two cities was 200,000 dollars actually in the hands of our Committee in America.

Owing to the peculiarities of British electoral law, egregiously unsuited for the circumstances of Ireland, those 200,000 dollars placed at once in Parnell's hands the power to force misrepresentatives on half the Irish constituencies.

No private candidate—as private candidates possess wealth in Ireland—is in a position to fight the hired pauper of a League which can overrun the country with threats and bribery and which can override the feeble guarantees for legality by weight of costs and emigration of witnesses. The generous and parading patriots in Brooklyn, Cincinnati, and elsewhere did not knock the British Empire into a pavement, or a corner-stone, or a goal, or even a cocked hat ; but they and their imitators have certainly abolished freedom of election in Ireland. It may be laid down, indeed, as a general rule, that in any country of men of moderate means which is blessed with a constitutional or electoral government, as all progressive countries now unfortunately are, the candidature of men of moderate means is utterly fruitless against wealthy organisations, whether lay or clerical, which can oppose hired paupers, with practically unlimited resources and practical immunity for electoral crime, against the shallow private purse of the ordinary citizen. The more pauperish the hired pauper, the completer the perfection of the scheme. This perfection flows from this circumstance, that, in case of the League or organisation candidate getting the worst of it before the election tribunal—by some miraculous chance—the victorious honest man cannot get his costs from the hired pauper. In a Meath election petition, for instance, where Mr. Michael Davitt had been unseated for outrageous malpractices against Mr. Pierce Mahony, Mr. Michael Davitt promptly declared himself insolvent, and Mr. Pierce Mahony could not obtain a farthing of his costs. By this judicious combination of pauperism in the politician and plutocracy in the organisation, constitutional government will continue to flourish in Ireland so long as the British electoral law exists ; and the British Government will continue to recognise the resulting product as the accredited *vox* of a fortunate populus or populace. Of course, it is possible that very exceptional or local circumstances may introduce other considerations. The other day, for instance, a Redmondite member of Parliament died, leaving a widow absolutely

destitute, and a ne'er-do-well son. As the deceased had been a patriot, the neighbourhood felt bound to raise a subscription for the poor widow—enough to set her up in an eggs and grocery store. A village wiseacre remembered a way out. 'If the son were to be elected' in his father's place, he would get the £4 a week from Mr. Redmond's 'Transatlantico-Transpacific pay-chest.' 'If he engaged to give £1 a week to his mother, the neighbourhood need not raise that subscription.' Of course, the ne'er-do-well agreed, and the problem was solved. The House of Commons has another patriot, and Mr. Redmond could count upon another independent vote for gagging Mr. Healy. Such are some of the fruits of that unlovely tree which was planted thirty years ago, by the subscriptions of those 'sixty-two cities' of the sapient land of the New Departure.

It might be advisable at this point to deal at some length with the characteristics and position of the Irish-descended population of the United States. Preferably, however, I think that this consideration may be postponed to a later stage of the Parnellite defacement of the Home Rule ideal. The attack which the £40,000, collected during the dollar hunt of January and February 1880, enabled Mr. Parnell and the Land League to deliver against his former colleagues in the Parliamentary party and against his former pledges as a Home Rule member, is a more pressing study. I have already said that the foundation of the Irish-American temperament must be sought in the fact that, as a whole, the Irish-American community is the offspring, the victim, and the avenger of the Black Famine of Ireland; the Black Famine of 1846 and 1847, when the British Government refused relief to every Irish family that possessed more than a quarter-acre of soil, and when wholesale expulsion from the village homes was the legal condition for a morsel of coarse food. The memory of that time of Satan was the chord upon which the Land League had played, when its dollar hunters asked for aid in the name of the very real scarcity of the winter of 1879 and 1880. What made that scarcity of real gravity was the general belief of the Irish tenantry

that the Irish landlords were using it, and would use it, as a means of depriving the cultivators of the benefit of compensation for disturbance under the Land Act of 1871. The long separation between the gentry and the farmers, which the whole policy of England since the Union had increased and envenomed, was now reaching a pitch of intensity which the Land League was founded to utilise, and which the British Government was frankly unable to understand. An agitation for land reforms was one thing; but an agitation for land reforms, which was proclaimed to be only a means of political and social revolution, introduced elements of provocation and crime, not always easy to distinguish from genuine wants and genuine remedies. The dollars of America had now armed the professors of wholesale Jacobinism with means of incitement and excitement, that the old Irish Parliament would have treated very summarily indeed; but that modern party politics denounced, encouraged, and ignored with the comfortable consciousness that, after all, neither English owners nor English tenants were more than incidentally concerned.

I do not for one single instant accept the current legend that Mr. Parnell desired the destruction of everything in general, or of the British Empire in particular. His idea of an Irish Republic always included a British policeman and other accessories. He was prepared to declare his eternal intention to lay the foundations of paving the way to the commencement of the road, which would ultimately lead to a position from which the independence of Ireland might be discerned with a really good telescope. So long as that prospect was demanded by his American donors, he was prepared to include that prospect within the field of his political vision. Properly speaking, Parnell was what is called a Whig, an Irish Whig; very discontented with his social and financial position, honestly disposed to be kind and humane, keen on reforms which placed him in the limelight; but, apart from the necessities of politics, a moderate man in love with his comfort, and averse from

more adventure than was strictly required by the necessity of balancing on a tight-rope, one end of which was held by Captain Moonlight and the other by the American Land League. To be perpetually prevented by inevitable accidents from obtaining Home Rule ; but to be indispensable to the parliamentary majority of a British Cabinet, while commanding the devotion and the dollars of the simple enthusiasts of the New Departure, New York ; this, indeed, was the ideal kingdom of an uncrowned king. I had enjoyed several years of my young friend's intimate colleagueship, before the gentlemen of Sackville Street, Dublin, discovered that what they wanted, ' as a Catholic nation, was a Protestant leader, and as a nation of peasants, a landlord leader.' Never for a single instant did I mistake him for a Wolfe Tone or a Green Robespierre. Circumstances obliged him to court the ear of Mr. Gladstone and Mr. Ford together or alternately. Even with the aid of an oratoric style of elaborate no-meaning when it came to definitions, and elaborate anything-you-please when talk was cheap, I think that he deserves to be commended for a certain dexterity. The angry Fenians, before the year 1880 was middle-aged, were so convinced that they had found him wanting, that they expelled from their Supreme Council all professors of the Parnellite faith. Mr. Gladstone, too, was to pronounce the major excommunication on his old ally. An amiable career, which had sometimes borne an aspect, but only an aspect, of ruthless determination, was to end in general disillusion. I must repeat that, until success spoiled him, he was a good colleague and a bonnie fighter. The earnest and strenuous revolutionists who were his charming sisters had found him out long before the Clann-na-Gael or the Treasury bench.¹

Parnell was a mediocrity, but, when self-indulgence had not clouded his vision and relaxed his nerve, a shrewd

¹ It was in the Ladies' Land League, whose president was Miss Anna Parnell, that Parnell was known as early as 1881 as 'Kitty,' from Mrs. O'Shea's name. On several occasions Parnell found severe critics among his sisters, who had a double dose of the Americanised spirit of irreverence for established institutions which they all derived from their mother.

mediocrity. He was, too, that 'bit of a county gentleman' which seemed to be indispensable to the followers whom he followed. The real powers of the Land League in Ireland, and the responsible powers for crudities of action which the finer tastes of Parnell might have avoided, were Davitt, Egan, and Brennan—Egan's nephew, I believe. At Westminster, among the nobodies of talent whom he was subsequently to characterise as 'gutter-sparrows,' Parnell might be king and assume the airs of a not over-considerate autocrat. In Ireland he was the gilt figure-head, behind whom the Triumvirate issued edicts of proscription and decreed processes of general subversion, which Parnell embraced or tolerated, until the trial of the Phoenix Park assassins occurred to convince Messrs. Egan and Brennan of the superior salubrity of an American clime, and Davitt was left with diminished support to recommend the nationalisation of the soil to Irish farmers bent on being their own landlords. I do not know that I ever saw Brennan. I believe he was clerk in his uncle's bakery. Mr. Egan I had known very fairly in Mr. Butt's time. He was active, intelligent, and energetic, with the repute of an efficient organiser. I have heard that he was originally connected with the Westmeath district, which was saturated with notorious Ribbonism. I only knew him as a Home Ruler, courteous, considerate, patriotic. The Land League first revealed in Egan's action and influence the utmost fanaticism against the entire class of owners of Irish land. There could be no doubt about the intense sincerity of Egan's conviction that 'the landlords must go.' Michael Davitt was a higher, gentler, more idealist nature; but like many idealists, he was an unshrinking fanatic on matters which were either under his ban or exalted by his admiration. His marked power of incisive and popular oratory was aided by a commanding and picturesque presence. He had a call to preach a covenant; and his covenant would have stood most things on their heads. His father had been attached to the estate office on an estate in Mayo, and there the child was born. The collapse of

tillage which followed Free Trade in Ireland ended the connexion of Davitt's father with the County Mayo before the boy was five years of age. Removed to Lancashire, the father was at first an official of an Irish friendly society, but failed to retain that employment; and the poor family knew the bitterest vicissitudes of a poor family in an English provincial town. All Davitt's youth was passed in England, until connexion with Fenianism brought him to the part of Irish Land Reformer through the circuitous and uncivilising road of nine years of penal servitude. For his hard career and scanty opportunities, Davitt's self-culture was wonderful, but thoroughly unfitted him for his mission of universal improver of Irish life and property. When I heard first of Parnell's appearance on the agrarian platform, my informant tersely added: 'Davitt has got him by the ear.' Davitt had. In all but his worst aberrations, there was always the milk of human kindness and a certain knight-errantry in Michael Davitt. He did much cruel wrong, which seemed to his partial vision to be simple right. Of all the men who took a leading part in the Land League agitation, Davitt was almost the solitary one with a conscious preference for truth.

The return of Parnell from the dollar land was the signal for a ferocious onslaught on the more distinguished and more Conservative members of the Home Rule party. Mr. Shaw and Colonel Colthurst in Cork, Captain King Harman in Sligo, Mr. O'Connor Don in Roscommon, were assailed with furious vituperation and all the auxiliaries whom America could subsidise. The contest forced on the chairman of the Home Rule party by Parnell was peculiarly treacherous, mutinous, and mean. Mr. Shaw, though generous to the extreme in his donations to Home Rule on foundation, was struggling with the financial difficulties which accompanied the return of bad times in Ireland, and was soon to lose his remaining fortune. Parnell could spend thousands at the cost of a treasury beyond the Atlantic; but the contest forced on Mr. Shaw

meant wanton and unaided loss and injury. The affront to the chairman of the party was, under all the circumstances, as dishonourable and dishonest as if Parnell had avowedly picked his pocket. We had entered upon a time when common honesty, like common decency and common humanity, was to disappear from the loudest section of Irish politics. Parnell was enabled, with his pockets bulging with greenbacks, to stand for three constituencies. This champion of Free Ireland had opened his apostolate by creating a corner in elections with money from abroad. When the electoral period had ended, Parnell had seated most of his executive staff. Together with a few later nominations they formed an instructive epitome and exemplar of the sage experience called to solve the gravest problems of Irish legislation. Taken with their qualifications, the leading gentlemen of Mr. Parnell's company were the following :—

John Redmond, Bill Office Clerk .	House of Commons.
Thomas Sexton, Journalist . . .	Dublin.
John Dillon, Surgeon	Dublin.
Arthur O'Connor, War Office Clerk	London.
J. J. O'Kelly, Journalist	New York.
John Barry, Manufacturer	Scotland.
T. P. O'Connor, Journalist	London.
Justin McCarthy, Journalist	London.
Captain O'Shea, Retired Officer . .	London.
T. M. Healy, Railway Clerk	Newcastle-on-Tyne.

Almost all these ' Cabinet Ministers of the Parnellite Ministry ' were men of promise in their modest professions, and most of them were public speakers of exceptional fluency and power. Probably not two of them could have been elected without the American money. Within five years they had recalled the Conservative Government to office. Within five years more they had torn Parnell from his leadership and were engaged in the furious controversies of the Parnell split. Within five years more they had seated the Salisbury and Balfour Cabinet in office and power for a period of ten years of absolute hostility

to the Home Rule programme and principle. That was the 'Irish Independence' that the New Departure had brought the Irish Americans for their money. In 1886, indeed, Parnell and the Parnellite party were on the utmost brink of disintegration and ruin over the O'Shea scandal at the Galway election; and if Parnell had not been able to overawe the dissentients with the communication that Mr. Gladstone had privately promised him 'Home Rule for Ireland,' the split of 1890 might have been antedated by four years. In this case, the dollars would have only secured a Parnellism of six years—a brief run for the Ford money!

It is truly extraordinary to note the estimates which English authorities have published on Parnell. Since he became a partner in English politics, his co-partners have felt bound to make him a superman. I find, for instance, that Sir Charles Dilke is quoted by Parnell's biographer to the following effect:—

Parnell hated England, English ways, English modes of thought. He would have nothing to do with us. He acted like a foreigner. We could not get at him as at any other man in English public life. Dealing with him was like dealing with a foreign power.

Supposing that Sir Charles Dilke is correctly reported, every word of this is erroneous, which perhaps may be due to the fact that Sir Charles Dilke himself was never a person to mix freely with his brother members, and he was certainly never a favourite with Parnell. There was one obvious reason for this latter trait. Sir Charles Dilke was one of the most omniscient persons that can be conceived, and Parnell had no information about anything outside of a narrow groove in which he was himself engaged, and simply detested general information. He hardly looked at a book, for instance, from one end of a year to the other. As for Parnell hating England or English ways, he lived in England almost all his life. He was intensely English in manner and taste. He sacrificed his

Irish position for the sake of an English Helen. He talked the regular sort of talk about English tyranny on the boards of the Ford-cum-Egan theatre, but

always came back to coffee and Haydee.

His business address was Kill Sassenach, Ballyslaughter, Ireland ; but his tastes were in the little villa at Eltham, Kent. He had been from babyhood in a Somerset dame school. He got his further schooling in Derbyshire and Oxfordshire. He was four years at Cambridge. When he returned to his family home in County Wicklow at the grown-up age of twenty-three, he knew nothing about Ireland, and cared just as much. Why, even Mr. Barry O'Brien has to describe his hero's indifference to Ireland and the Irish in 1870, when Mr. Isaac Butt was already founding the Home Rule Association, which the young Anglo-Irishman was treacherously and ungratefully to destroy :—

Up to this time Parnell had paid no attention to Irish affairs. He had probably never read an Irish history or political tract. He knew nothing of the career of his great-grandfather, Sir John Parnell, his grand-uncle, Sir Henry, or his grandfather, William Parnell. At Avondale politics were tabooed, and when Charles was there he spent his time fishing or shooting, riding or playing cricket. Ireland was almost a closed book to him.

If, according to Sir Charles Dilke, Parnell was a foreigner, he was especially a foreigner to Ireland. The Parnell home was, in fact, a type of those homes of the Irish gentry such as the Act of Union had made them, and such as acute observers like Professor Mahaffy deplored : alienated from the life and interests of Ireland, without influence because without patriotism ; idle, uncultured, with hardly a recreation even beyond their stable-boys ; a fishing-rod, a dog, and a gun ; slovenly householders, incompetent landowners ; between the Castle and the Jews. The Parnells were physically and intellectually gifted, especially the ladies of the house. These brought an emotion to

politics which their brother hardly shared. Miss Anna Parnell was the 'Grande Mademoiselle' of the Ladies' Land League. If Beauty be woman's kingdom, her sister, her fairest sister, was a queen. I have not forgotten a great ballroom in one of the greatest houses of Paris, thronged with loveliness, when amid a hush and a murmur, while heads were bowed and eyes looked eagerly, an exquisite face and figure, radiating charm, *rayonnante d'esprit*, advanced among some elder companions. 'Ah! La belle Americaine.' A muse and a grace! It was Miss Fanny Parnell. I have spoken of the scene before, and may again.

It is to be observed specially, that I mark and mention the actual status of Parnell's cabinet at the outset of the Land League policy in Parliament, with special reference to the actual profession of its members, merely to show what was the guarantee for experience and knowledge possessed by the Jacobin reformers of Irish land. Instead of men who were at least conversant with the matter, and conversant with property and business, the Parnellite cabinet was almost exclusively composed of young clerks and reporters, living a small town life, and almost all employed, or hoping to be employed, on salary as agitators under the Land League. Gone were the owners and heirs of estates, gone the men of commerce and business. A group of penniless lads, with the smallest claims to remunerative employment in ordinary circumstances, were to deserve payment out of a foreign revolutionary fund of £150,000 a year by satisfying the hates and rancours of its collectors and contributors. Looking to the personal relations between Parnell and his fellow-employees of the Land League, I always understood that he liked best Mr. T. P. O'Connor and Mr. W. O'Brien, and was probably liked best by them in return. He had chosen them himself. They were his editors and censors of news. They were both to abandon him at Mr. Gladstone's intervention, but they did so with some pain, and because they believed that Ireland could not afford to quarrel with Mr. Gladstone

in that emergency. Perhaps I ought to add Mr. J. J. O'Kelly, formerly of the *New York Herald*, to the list of Mr. Parnell's most trusted intimates ; and he never deserted his chief. As for the rest, they appeared to serve on the usual terms of stipendiaries. They shared the gains of victory, and they abandoned the leader of defeat. Mr. Justin McCarthy was a *Daily News* writer of the best type of Liberalism, who had left Ireland permanently thirty years before. Mr. Healy quickly developed a special insight into the intricacies of Mr. Gladstone's agrarian legislation, and showed an increasing admiration for the Grand Old Man. He disliked or distrusted Parnell long before the divorce. Sexton, who was the serious orator of the group, had a musical voice, and an endless facility for the composition and utterance of well-balanced sentences. His main faults were repetition and commonplace. All the venerable citations of Dublin patriotism were poured out in a gentle stream ; and when he had said the same thing five or six times, that was sufficient reason for presenting the identical matter in a few more embellishments. He was supposed to believe that he could lead much better than the titular chief. Parnell used to say that, 'when Sexton was wound up, he could always go for three hours.' Frequently he made a very fine speech, without originality. Mr. W. O'Brien was always an enthusiastic figure, and his voice readily rose to a shriek of apparent passion, and kept there. I played the harmless joke of suggesting to Parnell that O'Brien might be called Willie Wild, meaning 'Wild Willie,' there being a well-known Mr. Willie Wilde, brother of Mr. Oscar Wilde, in London at the time. Parnell told me with looks of consternation that the silly jest had got so into his head that he had addressed William O'Brien as 'Willie Wild,' but was happily not comprehended by the unsuspecting object. As for Dillon, he was feared by Parnell more than words can tell for his gift of stating crudities in the crudest fashion. I remember once there was a discussion about cattle being placed by the landlord upon tenantless land. Dillon arose and solemnly remarked

that 'cattle did not thrive on evicted land !' There had been horrible mutilations of beasts at this time. Parnell started to his feet, and declared that his honourable friend 'had been merely referring to an Irish superstition that bad luck came to property placed on an evicted farm.' The House nearly hooted the innocent Dillon, who declared that he had no cruel meaning in his words. Parnell was said to exclaim that 'John Dillon never opened his mouth but he put his foot in it.' The general impression made upon me by the new members of Parliament representing the Land League was that they knew nothing about the causes of distress or prosperity in Ireland, and that they thought they would be regarded as more patriotic if they used violent language than if they talked common sense. They were puppets, and ignorant puppets. Their leader was less a leader than a figure-head. The leaders and the paymasters were out of doors, often out of Ireland, and were almost exclusively men who knew nothing of Ireland's requirements, and who thought and acted from impressions derived, in the case of some, from personal suffering and misery as political prisoners, and in the case of all, from the memories of the cruel famine and the lawless suppression of Irish nationality. Parnell and Dillon and the rest were the public envoys and spokesmen of the movement, and any of them might be decorated with the name of leader ; but the leadership lay in America and in the pay-chest of the American organisation. Personally, I considered that the American Irish should follow and not presume to command the Irish motherland. The hard fact was, that organisations of the American Irish were thinking much less of the welfare of Ireland than of vengeance upon England. The most glorious benefit or honour to be gained by Ireland at the price of real reconciliation with England would be rejected by many, or most, of the members of these organisations. I had heard very terrible expressions of this state of mind. It was regrettable, it was hurtful to Ireland ; but it was distinctly human. I never believed in Parnell's iron will ; and, at all events, that

will was perfectly flexible and feeble in face of his paymasters.¹

In the month of May 1880 Parnell was elected chairman of the Home Rule party, which now really ceased to support the Home Rule programme. At the voting twenty-three members voted for Parnell, and eighteen for Shaw. Out of the 103 members for Ireland Parnell had twenty-three supporters. I did not attend the meeting at which Parnell was elected. I had attended a previous and adjourned meeting with the intention of supporting the re-election of Mr. Shaw. In the meantime, Mr. Shaw had committed a fundamental error of tactics. He had followed the Liberal party to the Government side of the House of Commons. As I had advocated that the Irish party should always remain in opposition to every British Ministry which did not restore the Irish Parliament, I could no longer support Shaw, and I was not going to vote for Parnell. I remained a private member of the Home Rule party, and recognised Parnell, not as leader, but as sessional chairman. So I continued for the most of three sessions. It is important to observe that not only non-members of the Land League like myself, but avowed Parnellites just elected on the Land League ticket, absolutely disclaimed the intention of choosing Parnell as leader in electing him as sessional chairman. Thus I find that on May 10, immediately after the election of party chairman, there was an Irish meeting at the South Metropolitan Institute in the Blackfriars Road, at which the following Parnellite members were present: Messrs. Arthur O'Connor, Justin McCarthy, T. P. O'Connor, and John Redmond. Quite a representative gathering. Mr. Arthur O'Connor, M.P., was

¹ There is an interesting illustration of the real subordination of the nominal leader to the opinions dominant in the Irish masses in some evidence by Mr. Matthew Harris before the Parnell Commission. Speaking of the uselessness of trying to obtain the punishment of agrarian crime by any intervention of a parliamentary leader, Mr. Harris said: 'If you assist in the smallest degree in the detection of a criminal connected with this agrarian crime, you would cease there and then to have the slightest public influence in Ireland. If Mr. Parnell were to give information of the humblest peasant in the county of Galway, he would cease to be a leader of the Irish people on the spot.'

in the chair on the occasion, and speaking in reference to Mr. Parnell's election, he expressly 'denied that Mr. Parnell wished to be leader. Mr. Parnell was ready to do the work of a private soldier in the ranks.' The proceedings appeared in the *Times* of the next day, and were a good deal remarked. Of course, it was quite right to point out that the chairmanship of the Parliamentary party involved no recognition of the leadership of the Land League—a matter erroneously assumed by the *Times* in subsequent denunciations. The repudiation of such a confusion is noteworthy on the part of such prominent Parnellites. The *Times* itself, shortly afterwards, in a leader of May 19, took occasion to observe that, as I have shown in this historical narrative, 'Mr. Parnell, it must be remembered, only entered the House of Commons in 1875, and did not become conspicuous as a politician until the stormy debates on the South Africa Bill began in 1877.' In plain words, Mr. Parnell began to achieve his fame or notoriety in supporting my arrangement with President Kruger for making the annexation of the Transvaal Republic the occasion for the utmost possible opposition to the Confederation measure which professed to ratify that annexation. Like the old jest about Disraeli catching the Whigs bathing and running off with their clothes, Parnell had been helped by Davitt and Devoy to my special copyright and creation—the policy of action.

A few weeks previously, on April 29, the election of Mr. Brand as Speaker of the new House of Commons had given me the opportunity of claiming the title of the Third party for the Home Rule representatives, who were equally independent of both the British parties. The *Times*, relating the matter, states :—

Mr. O'Donnell, who spoke from the Opposition benches below the gangway, said he rose on that occasion, as a member of that Third party in the House whose concurrence would probably be found to be more and more advisable on most matters of importance as session was added to session, for the purpose of adding his humble testimony to the universal respect in which the Right Hon. Mr. Brand was held.

Of course, my intervention was purely an intimation that even the accession to office of a British party which the Irish had supported at the polls made no change in the separateness and independence of the representatives of Ireland. As Sir Henry Lucy points out in his delightful 'Memories of Eight Parliaments,' my exaltation of the Irish claim to be a third party, co-equal and co-potential with Whigs and Tories, necessarily involved the baptism of a fourth party when the celebrated quartet which clustered and shone round Lord Randolph Churchill rose above the parliamentary horizon. The Fourth might obviously have been the Third, if the latter degree of numerical order had not been pre-empted in my speech on the speakership of Mr. Brand. In the words of Sir Henry Lucy :—

Incidentally the Fourth party was created. Various explanations of the origin of the historic name are current. . . . It actually had its origin in a passage in a speech by Mr. F. Hugh O'Donnell, who named the Irish Nationalists the Third party.

The summary of my speech from the *Times* corroborates the accuracy of the genial and omniscient chronicler of eight Parliaments.

When I spoke of the uninformed and inexperienced class of raw Parnellites who were to practise mere obstruction, because they did not know enough to practise anything better, I did not intend to include one particular beginner, Mr. T. P. O'Connor, M.P. for Galway in 1880. On the contrary, Mr. T. P. O'Connor, a master of arts of the Queen's University, and already a versatile journalist, was in my opinion by far the ablest man in the new political combination. Better at popular oratory than Sexton, without his prosiness ; less pungent but less rasping than Healy ; devoid of the pomposity of Dillon and the frenzy of O'Brien, Mr. T. P. O'Connor had, besides, that quality of adroit and managing man which not another Parnellite possessed in a remotely similar degree. Aware that something was lacking which makes for avowed

leadership, he first became the unobtrusive, the self-effacing, director of the reputed dictator, and, by practice made perfect, he has guided the entire policy of the McCarthys, Dillons, Redmonds, down to the present day. An honestly convinced Liberal of the Radical type at the start, his strongest sympathies kept him akin to the Liberal party even in the ugly vicissitudes of the Land League. He saw clearly that neither the Davitts nor Devoys possessed a single qualification for reformation or pacification, and he welcomed with prepared enthusiasm the approach of Mr. Gladstone to the Irish demand. At every stage in his connexion with Parnell he obtained control of the most permanent elements of influence in the Irish organisation and in the Irish world. When Parnell saw the advisability of supplying the popular newspapers read by Irish readers at home, in America, and the British colonies with the materials for a favourable judgment on the Parnellite party, the main direction of the 'Irish News Agency' came to Mr. T. P. O'Connor's acute judgment and attractive literature. He was helped, or impeded, by Messrs. Healy and O'Brien. For many years, accordingly, the views of the 'Irish News Agency' on Irish personages and English and Irish politics ruled the attitude of worthy Nationalists from East Ham to New Zealand. The control of the great organisation of the Irish electorate in Great Britain, that Home Rule Confederation, now rebaptised as the Land League in Great Britain and the National League in Great Britain, which dominated so many Liberal and Tory constituencies, was next conferred by Mr. Parnell upon his trusted follower. From the year 1883 to the year 1910, a period of twenty-seven years, the direction of the Irish vote in England and Scotland has mainly rested in the hands of Mr. T. P. O'Connor, perpetually reigning as president. Whoever might be the *Roi Fainéant* on the throne of straw in a Westminster Committee-room, Mr. O'Connor remained the *Maire du Palais*. I differ totally from his principles and practice, but that cannot prevent the historian from recognising and recording his skill and

tact, his devotion to his convictions, his bluff and genial caution, his kindness to many Irishmen, his prompt sympathy with oppression, his faith in the regeneration of Ireland by the Liberal party. Mr. T. P. O'Connor, M.P., shifted early the seat of his parliamentary qualification from the banks of the Corrib to the banks of the Mersey. As he gazes on the crowded waters and mighty trade of his later settlement, he can contrast the wealthy scene with the tumbling ruins which adjoin the Galway salmon leaps and the bare expanse of untenanted waters which, sweeping from Oranmore to Holy Aran, fill the vast and wasted confines of Galway Bay. Perhaps an Irishman may not bear altogether in vain the name of one of the Five Bloods of Ireland, and assuredly the managing talent of the member for Scotland Ward may not be unconnected with the mental heritage of a ruling race which ruled by other means. Before Mr. T. P. O'Connor, M.P., was a fortnight in Parliament, he had taken that command of Mr. Parnell which lasted until the Gladstone ultimatum. On the claim of Mr. Bradlaugh to be allowed to take an oath before the God whom he denied—a pretension which keenly affected Catholic consciences—Mr. Parnell followed Mr. T. P. O'Connor. I should have advised him to abstain, at the very least. The incident was the beginning of a widespread anxiety among the intensely religious priests of Ireland. It was later said that Parnell might have outlasted the bishops, if the curates also had not marched against him.

Mr. Parnell brought one distinguished Liberal into this Parliament at the expense of one of Mr. Butt's Home Rulers. The Liberal in question was Mr. Charles Russell, afterwards Sir Charles Russell and Lord Russell of Killowen.¹

¹ The announcement that the future Lord Chief Justice of England was supported against the Home Rule member for Dundalk by Messrs. Parnell, Pat Egan, and Joseph Biggar, was made in the *Freeman's Journal* of March 29, 1880, by Mr. George Fottrell, a leading Parnellite, afterwards Crown Solicitor. Notwithstanding this influential backing by the very flower of the Land League chiefs, Mr. Charles Russell's candidature was strongly condemned by the *Freeman's Journal*, which severely remarked: 'In Dundalk Mr. Russell, we see, is determined to contest the seat with Mr. Callan. Mr. Russell is not a Home Ruler. How a Home Ruler can vote for an anti-Home Ruler passes our comprehension.' Parnellite

The Home Ruler was Mr. Philip Callan. The constituency was Dundalk. Mr. Russell was also a Northern Irishman and he had previously come near to winning Dundalk. He was near relative of the Very Rev. Dr. Russell, a famous President of Maynooth College. Mr. Callan was the outgoing member, and belonged to an old Catholic family of the County Louth, his father having been the first Catholic representative of the county after Catholic admission to Parliament. Mr. Parnell had never liked Mr. Callan, who was a devoted follower of Mr. Butt and a close friend of Mr. Gray, the proprietor of the *Freeman's Journal*, that had not yet succumbed to the menaces of the Land League. The Parnellite and Land League influence added to Mr. Russell's previous strength secured his return for Dundalk. In the course of the election, hearing of the Parnellite opposition to a Home Ruler in favour of a Liberal, I sent a telegram of strong protest against Irish Nationalists supporting an advocate of the Act of Union against an advocate of an Irish Parliament. My telegram was widely circulated by Mr. Callan's committee. It made a very faithful friend for me out of Mr. Callan ; but Mr. Russell never forgave that I had endeavoured to keep him out of Parliament at a crucial moment in his career. My telegram was used by Mr. Callan to help him in the contest which he instantly began for the representation of County Louth, where he succeeded in becoming the senior member. Mr. Russell never forgot the support which he received from the Parnellite party on this important occasion. Eight years later, after Mr. Russell had become Sir Charles Russell and Liberal Attorney-General under Mr. Gladstone, I was led to remember these incidents in the course of my action against the *Times* in connexion with the Land League scandals ; and Mr. Parnell had no reason to regret them in the course of his defence before the Parnell Commission, where Sir Charles Russell was his leading counsel. From the point of view of Irish

Home Rule was soon to fade into Gladstonian Home Rule, and when Mr. Charles Russell of Dundalk became Sir Charles Russell and Attorney-General in the Gladstone Ministry six years later, he never forgot how he owed his entry into Parliament to the Land League chiefs,

interests in the House of Commons and within the Liberal party, there can be no doubt that there was simply no comparison between the value of Charles Russell and Philip Callan. The one was a great lawyer, a great advocate, an Irishman who loved the material interests of Ireland as well as the greatness of the British State. The other was only a Dublin barrister and rural half-squire of a somewhat obsolete type. But I am sure it was not admiration for Mr. Russell's claims which won the Parnellite votes ; and, in any case, the contrast was piquant between denunciation of the Act of Union at Chicago and the election of a Unionist at Dundalk. I am not an enthusiastic believer in party government, nor in parliamentary methods ; but if you yourself do not follow your flag, is the enemy likely to respect it ? On a clear issue of my country against the other man's government, I must vote for plain Dick or Harry against Bacon and Shakespere rolled into one. The two incidents put together—the Parnellite support of an anti-Home Ruler in Ireland, and Mr. Parnell's support of the Bradlaugh claim at Westminster—produced a deep impression upon me and many others as well. Englishmen please to fancy that Irishmen must be Radicals in rejecting an Act of Union which we hold to be a perfectly illegal violence done to a Sovereign Parliament and Constitution. On the contrary, all the genuine Nationalists whom I have met—meaning by Nationalists not mere haters of England, but lovers of Ireland above all—are full of the most old-fashioned Conservatism in politics, religion, and society. A great deal of what is called Conservatism in England is to us rank, unprincipled, ineffective Radicalism of the most dishonest kind.

CHAPTER XVII

THE SESSION OF 1880—FAILURE OF CROPS IN IRELAND— THE OPPORTUNITY OF DAVITT AND PARNELL

Land League Sympathisers in Liberal Party and Cabinet—National Fenians detest Land League—Mr. H. J. Gladstone and Frank Byrne—Compensation for Disturbance—National Fenians oppose Parnell — Parnellites and Bradlaughites — The Fourth Party — Tipperary and Northampton.

I WAS a lonely, lonely man, as I looked on the crowd of newcomers who sat uttering strange watchwords and exhibiting strange passions around Mr. C. S. Parnell on his election for Cork and their election for the various constituencies which could as yet be controlled by the Land League branches and the American money. Nearly half the old comradeship sat with Shaw on the Liberal benches. Gone were all the colleagues who symbolised the Union of Ireland under Isaac Butt; gone Lord Francis Conyngham, our genial whip; gone O'Connor Don, gone Lord Robert Montague, P.C.; gone Hon. Charles Ffrench and Hon. Wilfred O'Callaghan; gone or going Colonel King Harman, who had been hon. secretary of the Foundation Conference of the Home Rule party. Penny-a-liners from New York and Lambeth, from Mallow and Drumcondra; out-of-works from half a dozen modest professions had come in their place to earn the wages of Mr. Patrick Egan and Mr. Patrick Ford. It glads me to this day to remember that I never broke bread, never shared cup or glass, with one of the useful satellites. Never, indeed, had I eaten of Parnell's bread; though he ate of mine fifty times, when, after a conference or an evening in the cosy library at Serjeants' Inn, I brought him out to lunch, or dinner, or

supper at the Rainbow, or Sweeting's, or the Cock, or the Cheshire Cheese, or some other of the old-time hostelrys of old-time Fleet Street. Not that he was inhospitable. Simply he was my guest, as he was in my diggings and in my Latin Quarter. The newcomers had what is called more brains, perhaps, than many of the departed Moderates. They had more of the ready assertion, the ready evasion, the gift o' the gab. Probably there were far more of what was called brains in the sparkish ranks of the gay and desperate disclassees round Lucius Sergius Catilina than among hundreds of the stolid senators and equites whom he marked for spoliation. States are founded not on gab, but on citizenship.

As I had my own policy to carry through, and must abide in the British Parliament to carry it through, I took advantage of the theory that Parnell was only a sessional chairman in the Parliamentary party; and on that basis contrived to call myself a member of the party till 1883, when I quitted it outright, and quitted the British Parliament also in 1885. What I found in the Parliament completed my hopelessness of benefit in Ireland. This discovery was that the Land League had keen sympathisers not only in the Radical portions of Mr. Gladstone's party, but in the Radical portion of Mr. Gladstone's Cabinet. From their point of view, these Radicals were rather to be praised. They did not love landed aristocracy, and they regarded Irish landlords as the worst specimens of a landed interest, just as they had disliked established churches and had regarded the Irish Protestant Church as the worst specimen of a Church Establishment. They had never heard of the steady pressure of Unionism for a century which had driven, cajoled, or outrooted the Irish gentry far from sympathy or co-operation with the mass of their countrymen. If they questioned the Irish gentry who still sat in the House of Commons, the English Radicals could never suspect that the Irish landowners had ever possessed one patriotic sentiment. Even now, when British legislation was on the point of casting the Irish estated class into

the melting-pot for ever, that class turned with aggressive fondness to the reluctant bosom of Britannia, and flung its petulant shout of enmity and contempt at the Irish nation. There were a brace of able and accomplished Hamiltons; there was a McMorrogh O'Cavanagh, excelling in intelligence while defective in body; there were the representatives of the University of Dublin, including the heir of the name and the oratory of Plunket. Nobody ever heard them speak on an Irish question, without having the sensation of feeling brine and acid applied to sensitive wounds. That was, indeed, a great excuse for Radical loathing, a great opportunity for the American leveller, a hopeless spectacle for an Irishman who loved all Ireland.

In the present chapter I shall narrate the essentials of what happened between the election of Mr. Parnell for Cork and his imprisonment in Kilmainham, including not only the work of the Land League in and out of Parliament, but the main issues of British politics, such as those revolving around the Bradlaugh question, in which the Irish party was closely interested and engaged. The Queen's Speech was, as regards Ireland, especially as regards the relief of distress, no improvement upon the programme from the Throne which had adorned or disappointed the expiring energies of the last Parliament. There might be some addition to the measures taken by the late Government in the way of loans and subsidies. The Peace Preservation was, however, not to be renewed, and the Gladstone Cabinet expressed its intention of dealing with disturbance by the ordinary law. Many persons considered that if the measures against disturbance had been retained, and the relief of distress had been very largely extended, the result would have been better both for peace and for material welfare. I endeavoured to judge the emergency from the point of view of a member of the Irish Parliament; and I asked myself what would be the action of the Irish House of Commons, even with a Grattan in the premiership, if an agitation of open menace were convulsing the country,

lavishly supported by foreign funds, carried on by means of a central assembly operating through a close ramification of branches and agents, and openly calling on the masses to defy the laws, to deny the means of life to individuals, to utilise a season of distress not for the relief of poverty, but for the creation of passion and the inculcation of violence? It seemed to me that Irish life and property would be immeasurably better protected by a Grattan Cabinet in College Green, Dublin, than by a Beaconsfield or Gladstone Cabinet at Westminster. It might be more pleasing to the Irish susceptibilities of Mr. Parnell and his friends—or it might not—to be laid by the heels in jail: not in a Kilmainham rest-house, but in a vulgar jail. It might be equally pleasing, or it might not be pleasing at all, to have regiments of Irish yeomanry and militia, officered by the landed gentry of Ireland, quartered on all districts where boycotting, or cattle-maiming, or firing into dwellings was a local pastime. Most certainly, and most assuredly, the Irish Lords and Commons would take such sharp steps against the operation of the American money, or even the receipt of the American money, that several hundreds of energetic patriots would not only find themselves destitute of dollars, but accommodated with heavy chains and long sentences. If the appreciators of dollars kicked at these premonitory attentions of the native legislature, and tried violent resistance, they would be asked to look down the muzzles of a few thousand muskets before the insurrection was twenty-four hours older. The Irish Land Laws might require reformation, and the Prime Minister—Mr. Grattan or Lord Charlemont—might have put Land Law Reform in a prominent place in the Speech from the Irish Throne, but there should be no maimings, or killings, or stopping the necessities of life, by way of expediting ameliorative legislation, as they say in Parliamentese. I know that in this very year there were men, members of Parliament, who went about urging ‘every man in Ireland to have his rifle’; urging that all farmers who refused to join the Land League should

be ‘ visited by a couple of men who did not know what fear was,’ until this ‘ visiting ’ had forced them to become Land Leaguers; urging that the old interdiction of the necessities of life which the Roman law decreed against public enemies should be applied to man, woman, and child guilty of ignoring or opposing the orders of the League. I knew these things, though I had better work to do than reading this poisonous froth and scum. I knew also what the manliest and best of the Irish rebels were saying of the desperate and dirty work. I knew what John O’Leary was saying, who had been a head of the Fenian rising. I heard James Stephens, the Head Centre, call the thing the ‘ meanest and dirtiest tyranny in the world.’ I read how P. J. Smythe, who had rescued convict rebels from Australia, called the Land League ‘ the League of Hell.’ And I thought I knew enough to be quite sure that, if there were an Irish Government in an Irish Parliament, governed even by such enemies of foreign rule as John O’Leary, James Stephens, and P. J. Smythe, it would have gone most promptly and severely hard with any of these parliamentary emissaries of scoundrelism if they had been caught at their work. There were hundreds of things done in these years by the Land League for which an Irish Parliament would have given the cat-o’-nine-tails and the gallows, just on the spot. The conspicuous fact about the British Governments, differing in political party, was that they were precisely identical in doing little for the relief of starvation, and still less for the protection of life, liberty, and property. ‘ A totally incompetent Government,’ the old Irish Parliament would have said. Yet under the old Irish Parliament the population rose from one million to five millions; while under the new British Government the population has sunk from eight millions to four millions. That reminds me that since the famous disestablishment and disendowment of the Protestant Church, which was to do so much good to the Catholics, but which the lay Catholics never wanted, there are fifteen hundred thousand fewer Catholics in Ireland than before

the British Government stole the surplus six millions of pounds sterling from the Protestant clergy. The luck almost seems to have left the Irish Catholics as soon as they lost the Established Church.

The need of taking more effective measures to grapple with the evils of the failure of crops in Ireland was the subject of an amendment by Mr. O'Connor Power, member for Mayo, where the pinch of poverty was felt most cruelly. Mr. O'Connor Power, taking up the complaint of the late chairman of the party, Mr. Shaw, a couple of months previously, condemned the absence of Government action. Let it be said at once that I am bringing no censure, and casting no doubt, upon the kind and sympathetic sentiments of Mr. Gladstone, Mr. Forster, and the rest of the ministers towards Irish distress. Mr. Gladstone and Mr. Forster were keenly and deeply moved by the indubitable evidence of suffering in the west of Ireland. But the government of another country by a different one, especially when the foreign interference has lasted long enough to enfeeble the administrative power of the subjected country, is a sluggish and self-hindering proceeding. When at length the ministry took up the substance of a Bill brought in by the member for Mayo, August was come before any relief could have been available; and the Bill did not operate at all, because the House of Lords threw out the Bill. It was again the fears of the Land League's misuse of it which had prevented the acceptance of the Government measure by the Peers.

Although the Liberal feeling was distinctly favourable to material reform in Ireland, the position was by no means as favourable as this might seem to imply. The sixty men of the Farmers' Alliance were thinking above all of British agricultural reform, and cared more for a Hare and Rabbits Bill than for all Ireland. Personally, I could not complain. They had done their work, so far as I was concerned, in capturing the counties from Lord Beaconsfield. The forty or fifty men, whose return had been largely helped by the Home Rule Confederation, felt naturally

bound to show that they were quite independent of undue Irish pressure. The tendency was distinctly anti-Home Rule to a marked degree, and the word had been in circulation ever since the rise of the Land League 'that the Irish would be good Liberals enough if they could get rid of their landlords.' In fact, I came to reckon this Liberal House of Commons as more anti-Irish on the national question than many Conservatives. An interesting incident occurred which illustrated the attitude of unfriendly reserve towards Irish Nationalism which prevailed among the victorious Liberals. As I have mentioned already, the Irishmen of Leeds had made a magnificent rally in support of the candidature of Mr. Herbert J. Gladstone, the Premier's son. Now, after the battle, the Leeds Irish were disposed to be proud of their part in the victory, and were saying that Mr. Herbert Gladstone had stated that, though too young a politician to pledge himself to Home Rule, he would be open to the formation of a favourable judgment in the future. It was something to that effect, and most probably the Leeds Irish were making a great deal out of very little. Mr. Herbert Gladstone has always been a politician of singular straightforwardness and delicate honour, as fair to an opponent as faithful to an ally and true to a subordinate. But there was some straining at interpretation by the Leeds Home Rulers, and here there was an intervention which is important in view of future complications between the *Times* and Mr. Parnell. A good many men still living can remember how the *Times* in its campaign against Mr. Parnell published the damning fact that Frank Byrne, the Invincible assassin, had been his 'private secretary.' A man's private secretary comes very intimately into a man's life, and the *Times's* assertion, made doubtless in good faith, looked bad in conjunction with other things. I, as former vice-president of the Home Rule Confederation, wrote from Germany that Byrne was nothing of the kind to Parnell, that he was only a paid secretary of the electoral organisation, and that Isaac Butt and I had appointed him long before Parnell and Parnellism.

Whereupon the *Times* began a series of observations upon me, which made me bring an action for libel against that paper. I mention all this in this place precisely because it was in connexion with Mr. Herbert Gladstone's election for Leeds that Frank Byrne became a momentary correspondent of the *Times* itself, and figured in its columns precisely as 'Acting Secretary of the Home Rule Confederation.' Here is the future Invincible's letter in the *Times* of May 12, 1880 :—

MR. HERBERT GLADSTONE, M.P., AND HOME RULE.

To the Editor of the *Times*.

SIR,

My attention has been called to a letter from Mr. Herbert Gladstone, M.P., in the *Times* of yesterday, in which he impugns the accuracy of the statement made in your columns in reference to his reply to a deputation from the Leeds Home Rule Association on the 6th instant. Mr. Gladstone says that he did not say that, being a young politician, he might vote for the Home Rule motion for inquiry in a year or two. The following is an extract from the official report of the deputation which waited on Mr. Gladstone, forwarded by Mr. Myles Lee, Secretary, Leeds Home Rule Association, and one of the deputation :—

'He, Mr. Gladstone, did not know much of political life yet, and would not say that in the course of a year or two he would not vote for the inquiry.'

I am, Sir,

Most obediently yours,

FRANK BYRNE,

*Acting Secretary of the Executive of
the Home Rule Confederation.*

3 ADELAIDE PLACE, LONDON BRIDGE,
LONDON, May 11th.

There was, of course, nothing in the complaint against Mr. Gladstone. The Leeds Association had, besides, been instructed by me to vote for Mr. Herbert Gladstone, like all other Liberal candidates, simply because he was opposing Lord Beaconsfield. The complaint was a mere bit of local fussiness. But there is Frank Byrne figuring in the *Times* itself as only an acting official of an official body, which

had no more personal connexion with Parnell than with Butt! At the same time, the trifling incident showed that Liberal candidates who had received Home Rule support were careful to maintain their perfect aloofness from the Irish national question. There were hundreds of these Liberals far, far less friendly to Ireland than the courteous and sympathetic young member for Leeds. An average Liberal was far more alien to a lot of Irish views than scores of Conservatives, than Lord Salisbury himself, than Lord Randolph Churchill and Mr. John Gorst. It took a cunning and unscrupulous intriguer to bang and bolt the doors of possible co-operation—with respect for principles on both sides—between Ireland and traditional England. Of course, in dealing on Irish matters with British Conservatives or Liberals, I simply pursued the advantage of my country, helping what I preferred, or opposing what I disapproved, entirely with a view to Ireland's gain. Both sides ought to have known equally that the foes of to-day might be the allies of to-morrow. If Parnellism and the American money had not broken Home Rule and debauched and demoralised a large section of Ireland, the whole history of recent times for Ireland and Britain would have been higher and happier, for up to then there had been little real animosity to Ireland among the English population.

The fate of the Compensation for Disturbance Bill, tardily introduced, indicated the worser situation which had come into existence. It had been adopted from Mr. O'Connor Power by Mr. Forster, the new Chief Secretary; and its origin lay back so far as Mr. O'Connor Power's protest on the Address. Its necessity was great. The Land Act of 1870 had secured the Irish tenantry compensation for disturbance by eviction, 'unless in case of non-payment of rent.' The exception seemed to guarantee the tenant under ordinary circumstances. In a time of acute failure of crops, however, even a reasonable rent might be beyond a ruined man's power to pay. Was he to lose farm and future for the inevitable accident of a ruinous season?

Such a ruinous season had now occurred. Mr. Forster brought in a very fair and just Bill to extend the right of compensation for disturbance even in case of non-payment of rent, for the limited period till the end of the coming year of 1881, and only in case where the county-court judge considered that the non-payment was the result of the pending failure of crops. Mr. Forster was as upright, kindly, and compassionate a nature as ever had to direct the English administration of Ireland. Under ordinary circumstances in Ireland, the Bill could not have provoked violent opposition. The unscrupulous acts and threats of the Land League introduced new perils. The avowed object of the Land League was to use every means—the failure of the crops, the unpopularity of the landlords, the national passion against English rule, the fears of isolated men when ‘visited’ by the ‘fearless’ agents of the organisation—everything, and every pretext, to ruin the owners of landed estate. The landowners now asked themselves, what use will our mortal enemies make of the legal means for refusing the payment of rent which can be found in this Bill? I was intimately acquainted with Major Burnaby of Khiva, who had married a lady possessing land in County Wicklow. He was a warm friend of Ireland. He told me that all over Wicklow the Land League agents were boasting that Parnell was getting a suspension of rents by blocking the Government; and that ‘if the tenants were men,’ they need never pay rent again. ‘If the tenants throughout Ireland stop rents for a couple of years, who is to pay the annual charges on landed estates? The Irish landlords will be all sold up in twelve months.’

That was the peril, and the supreme peril. The country, both countries, had to deal with a foreign enemy, paid with foreign money, engaged in breaking up existing society in Ireland, and directing the special hate and cupidity of the masses against the landowners, who had for eighty years stood for the Act of Union against the Irish nation. This was the terrible weakness of the Irish

gentry. Do what they would, act ever so humanely and justly, they were still the English garrison. By the denationalisation of the proprietary of Ireland, the proprietary had become the 'enemy of the Irish race.' If they were hard landlords into the bargain, so much the better. That made them and England detested all the more. 'We are to be ruined,' said Burnaby, 'because we are loyal to England. Will England compensate us?' I smiled as sympathetically as possible, and said that I understood from the lawyers that there was precisely 'no compensation for loss by acts of the Queen's enemies.' If the Land League is openly disloyal, then, according to the British Constitution, it has a right to ruin you without your getting compensation. I added that I hoped he still admired the British Constitution. Burnaby was a soldier, and his immediate commentary on Blackstone might have been considered disrespectful by that eminent jurist.

No doubt there was the danger. If the Land League, on securing the passage of the new Relief Bill, were to announce to all Ireland that the tenants were now entitled to suspend all rent payment for eighteen months pending the order of a county-court judge, there was little doubt of the result. The mere mass of professing applicants would break the back of all the county courts in the kingdom. The unjust would reap the reward intended for the just alone; and every tenant who could pay, but would not, would be fortified by the same Act which intended to protect only the holding of the poor man who was really impoverished for the time by the bad season. If there had been some Irish Catholic landowners of eminence like Mr. O'Connor Don to explain the situation, the Bill might have got adequate safeguards, though that would be difficult so long as the Land League existed. But O'Connor Don had been specially attacked with the American money and agitation, and an ex-war-correspondent of the *New York Herald* represented the agricultural interests of Roscommon. Though Mr. Forster accepted amendments extending the

protection of the Bill to all tenants of £30 valuation, when the measure came to the third reading Mr. Parnell walked out, in order to show how poor was his opinion of the value of the Bill! When the House of Lords, fearing the use which the Land League would make of the practical suspension of evictions for non-payment of rent, rejected the Bill, then the Parnellites simulated an agony of apprehension at the 'destruction by the Lords of all defence for the tenantry,' and made the matter an excuse for fresh appeals to civil war. They were getting their money, all that made them important and powerful, from an Irish-American party which considered that war without mercy against all friends and supporters of England was legitimate and right. It was a thoroughly characteristic member of this party who had cried to Mr. Parnell in America: 'Five dollars for bread, but twenty for lead.' So long as money could only be earned by acting up to the ideals of such paymasters, Parnell and his men acted up to their ideals.

Here it must be observed that the American party which supported the Land League in Ireland were not the National Fenian party, but only the New Departure section, swollen by the adhesion of the ignorant and uninformed readers of Ford's 'Irish World.' As I have carefully explained, the passion of all these hundreds of thousands against England was genuine and natural, considering that they all knew, and very many had suffered, the horrors of the Black Famine and the woful emigration afterwards. If the Government of the two Sicilies had treated a total starvation of millions as Ireland had been treated, the *Times* and the *Standard* would find no difficulty whatever about sympathising with a good deal of sleepless hatred against the Government of the two Sicilies. Only the best part of the Irish Americans did not think that the methods of the Land League carried on the national war against England with any credit or honour to the Irish cause. At the very time that Mr. Parnell was denouncing

all and sundry in the House of Commons, there was a powerful party in America which was refusing to take him seriously; and he knew it. I have examined very carefully, both in Ireland and America, the best accounts of this critical time of Parnellism. My informants were men of high intelligence, with great opportunities for knowing the facts. The proceedings of the Land League were repudiated by the best class of Irish Nationalists in America from the year 1880 onwards, and a reservoir of dollars, not usually devoted to any patriotic objects, had to be tapped by Mr. Patrick Ford and his assistants in order to counterweigh the defection of the true Fenians. The fact was that the repugnance of men who had the military spirit increased every day at the tales of outrage to dumb beasts, violence to unarmed men, callous refusals of the necessities of life even to the women and children of your opponents. The pronounced disgust of Stephens, O'Leary, Smythe, Kickham, at this *jacquerie*, this *Bauernkrieg*, was spreading through larger and larger circles of the old Fenianism. Many, like the Dr. Carroll of Philadelphia who had conferred with Parnell and myself two years before, and who had accepted the outlines of the New Departure as they appeared in print, found that the facts which filled in these outlines were little calculated to help any form of Irish nationhood as they occurred in the Land League counties. The immense importance of the distinction between the true Fenians and what may be called the Ribbon Fenians, men who alleged that independence could be reached through attacks on landlords and on landlord property, is habitually ignored or suppressed in England. It is forgotten, unknown, or suppressed, that the Fenians, when they rose or attempted to rise in 1866 and 1867, had often large districts of country at least temporarily in their power, and that not a single hair was hurt of man or beast on the side of the estated and official classes. The venerable Bishop Moriarty of Kerry, one of the most passionate denouncers of the Fenian movement, placed on record in a celebrated

sermon his pride and gratitude that 'the misguided Fenians' had at any rate done nothing to disgrace themselves.

I have another great source of consolation (said the Bishop), that no outrage was committed on the property of any persons. Those unfortunate youths came by the houses of many of the gentry. Though they were spent with fatigue, and footsore, and parched with thirst, they did not harm anyone's property to the value of a sixpence. This proves that the outbreak was not intended as one of rapine and plunder, or as a war on the gentry of the country.

It makes a man sick with anger and disgust to read those organs of the English press which make no distinction between such chivalrous and stainless enthusiasts 'making no war on the gentry of the country, harming nobody's property to the value of a sixpence,' and the sordid mobs and mob-leaders of the Land League mutilating the ox and the horse, boycotting the woman and child, and alleging—O foul profanation!—that this was the way of nationhood.

So grave was the anti-Parnellite crisis growing in America in this very session of 1880, while a powerful party of Mr. Gladstone's Cabinet were already admiring and aiding the Land League chief as the master of Ireland, that Michael Davitt had to be dispatched in hot haste to repair the mischief, or to discover supplementary resources. Parnellism at any time before Mr. Gladstone's Home Rule Bill would have collapsed like a burst bladder if the American dollar stayed at home. I have satisfied myself that we can accept the following account of this Davitt mission, which is contained in Mr. Barry O'Brien's panegyric of Parnell (vol. i, pp. 241-6). I only indicate the revelations, and it is to be remembered that Mr. Barry O'Brien is the thick-and-thin admirer of the Land League's figure-head. Davitt went to America now to save Parnellism. It will be remembered that I have already quoted from a letter from Davitt to me in 1884, in which the Father of the Land League admits that Parnellism was universally

regarded by the Irish as a sham, but that they did not as yet like to say so. For my own part I, who had known Parnell so intimately, never believed that he was the ferocious irreconcilable of Fenian dupes and English worshippers. As soon as he had got to the top, and had been duly recognised by the English Government, Parnell would forget his tearing and raging agitation and accept some instalment of what could be called Home Rule. 'Whisht, man, whisht! In twelve months we shall have the handling of millions of money yearly.' Poor Mr. Devoy and the rest who accepted the New Departure would soon learn that smashing the landlords was *not* a certain method of ending British rule in Ireland. Meantime, Michael Davitt is hastening to America; and Dr. Carroll of Philadelphia, my old visitor, was to denounce the New Departure, the Land League, and the whole Parnellite party. Let us hear the biographer of Parnell:—

There was still a party in the Clann-na-Gael opposed to the New Departure. The Clann-na-Gael man (Dr. Carroll), who had come to England in 1878, had formed an intense dislike to Parnell, in addition to his hostility to the policy of Devoy and Davitt. Davitt soon learned that things were not going quite smoothly. In May he sailed for New York to co-operate with Devoy in defeating their opponents in the Clan. The Supreme Council of the Irish Republican Brotherhood had previously dispatched Mr. John O'Leary to defeat Davitt's plan. The Clann-na-Gael man opened the proceedings by moving a resolution severing all connexion with the Constitutionalists. Parnell was not to be trusted. The prominent Fenian (John O'Leary) attacked Davitt.

I ask my English readers to read and meditate Mr. Barry O'Brien's summary of Mr. John O'Leary's speech on this occasion. It will illustrate what I have said on the immeasurable width of the moral gulf which separates the National Fenian from the Parnellite or Ribbonman. Of course, the English press will persist in ignoring the distinction. Do I not read every cow-hunting atrocity headed in London papers of the first rank with the insulting

lie : ' Irish Nationalist Outrages ' ? The envoy of the Supreme Council of the Fenian Brotherhood spoke to this effect :—

He said that the New Departure was immoral and impolitic. There was to be a pretence of loyalty, but in reality treason all along the line. He did not believe in a policy of dust-throwing and lying, but that was the policy of the New Departure. The Fenian movement was purely a National movement. Though he were to stand absolutely alone, he would resist this dishonest and unholy alliance. He believed in righteous means as well as righteous ends.

Davitt, as Parnell's partner, turned from National Fenians like O'Leary and Carroll, and enlisted the alliance of . . . Ford and his fetid print. In the words of Mr. Barry O'Brien :—

In America Davitt formed a fast friendship with Patrick Ford, the proprietor of the *Irish World*, who defended the policy of the New Departure, collected funds for the Land League, and preached a furious crusade against England.

Henceforth the cubs of the Land League fattened at the dugs of the dynamite *World*, a disgrace to Ireland under the name of *Irish*, the ' lying ' name, as Mr. John O'Leary called the thing. When Davitt returned to join Parnell after the close of the parliamentary session, the dollars of the Newest Departure were pouring into the Land League at the rate of £2000 to £3000 a week. Parnellism controlled Irish agitation precisely so long as American dollars kept the agitators in the streets and fields and the members in the House and the lobby.

Of course, few understood all the connexions until long afterwards. There was one connexion which I discerned very quickly, namely, the alliance between a number of the Parnellite members and certain elements in the Liberal party. On the Bradlaugh affair, Mr. T. P. O'Connor led Mr. Parnell and his intimates into the Bradlaugh lobby. On the motion of Mr. Briggs to exclude the remains of the young Prince Imperial from Westminster Abbey, Mr.

T. P. O'Connor led Mr. Parnell and his intimates to do this contumely to the slain son of an Empress who had loved Ireland and had not closed her generous hand against Irish distress. In one of my last conversations with the venerable and illustrious Bishop Dupanloup,—the great prelate was my colleague in a French society,—only a few months before the great Churchman and friend of liberty went to his last sleep, he had recalled a solemn day many years before, when he, Monseigneur Dupanloup, had preached a charity sermon for the benefit of poverty-stricken Irish ; when noble ladies of the Imperial court had held the collecting plates ; and when the Empress Eugénie, then in the heyday of her beauty and power, had sent a large cheque from her private purse : ‘ For Catholic Ireland, the Friend of France.’ How the venerable priest had spoken of ‘ the chivalrous Irish ! ’ See them backing Briggs in a quarrel which was not theirs ! See Parnell’s zeal for the unspotted Britonism of the Westminster fane ! While Mr. John Bright, Sir Charles Dilke, and Mr. Chamberlain voted with Mr. Briggs, Mr. Gladstone abstained ; and his act was understood to have greatly pleased the French Republican Government, and to have been the forerunner of the selection of the distinguished Republican, M. Challemel Lacour, as ambassador to London, the following year. In effect, it was Mr. Parnell and his followers who had decided the vote, as the numbers only gave a total majority of fifteen to the Briggs motion. I voted for the honour to the slain boy, and I remembered.

That favourite project of certain elements of the Liberal party of the day, the abolition of the House of Lords, was also presented by Mr. T. P. O'Connor to the devotion of the members for the New Departure. In the beginning of August, Mr. T. P. O'Connor gave notice of a resolution to effect this desirable object. A fortnight later, on August 23, the six-months-old member for Galway received in the Conference-room of the House some 400 delegates of Radical and Freethought Associations come to assure him of their moral support in his great enterprise, and

pledging themselves, in case of his motion being rejected by an incompletely advanced Liberalism, to take further steps for the total abolition of the hereditary branch of the legislature. In consequence of the crowded condition of the Conference-room, an adjournment was made to the Westminster Palace Hotel ; and a procession, memorable or otherwise in the constitutional annals of the Empire, moved across the space between House and hotel, headed by Mr. T. P. O'Connor, M.P., Mr. Justin McCarthy, M.P., vice-chairman of the Parnellite members, Mr. Briggs, M.P., the hero of the previous month's scene, and other makers of records. A fortnight later the inevitable demonstration in Hyde Park to demand the eradication of the House of Lords from a free soil took place, with the usual solemnities, under the presidency of Mr. T. P. O'Connor, M.P., supported by Mr. J. J. O'Kelly, M.P., the ex-war correspondent of the *New York Herald*, Mr. John Barry, M.P., who had moved the substitution of Mr. Parnell for Mr. Butt in the chair of the Home Rule Confederation, and other distinguished personages.

It appears that somehow I had failed to express my admiration of these important proceedings with sufficient distinctness, as I found myself at this time hotly denounced on Land League platforms as a supporter of the House which was under sentence of eradication, one of my hottest critics being that Mr. Brennan, Mr. Patrick Egan's nephew, whom Mr. Barry O'Brien describes as 'Fenian Secretary Brennan' along with 'Fenian Secretary Egan,' as 'helping Parnell to drive the League ahead in Ireland, while Davitt was forming branches throughout the United States.' As all the representatives of National Fenianism had repudiated these Ribbon Fenians, I can only repeat my caution to the reader not to confuse agrarian Jacobinism, imposed upon Ireland by certain elements in America and Britain, with national independence, which, whether feasible or not, is at all events respectable.

It is not my duty either to defend or to decry the aphorism that 'the Radical tail moves the Whig dog.'

But it is necessary in the highest degree to note the prompt appearance of a British 'Radical tail' in the year 1880, which was finally to move the British 'Whig dog' to practical identification with Parnell and Parnellism. If the state of Ireland to-day is the living justification of the Land League policy, at least a commencement of the credit is due to Mr. T. P. O'Connor and the Bradlaughite democrats, whose angry protestations for the next couple of sessions were to answer the assaults of the anti-Bradlaugh party. Neither the American money nor the native boycott could have touched the fringe of success, if it had not been for the acceptance and admiration which Mr. Parnell and his methods obtained, at first in Radical quarters, and subsequently among the eminences of the Liberal party. I do not question. I merely record. No less a personage than Lord Chief Justice Coleridge wrote to Parnell's advocate in 1889 that from the very first he had treated the forged letters with 'utter scorn, to which my respect and admiration for Mr. Parnell possibly contributed.' The Lord Chief Justice added that this respect and admiration were 'due only to what Mr. Parnell had said and done.' Mr. Parnell himself admitted that he had 'said' what was 'deliberately intended to mislead.' As for what he had 'done,' the Chief Justice could not speak more approvingly than did Mr. Gladstone himself on April 21, 1893, when the great Liberal Premier declared: 'I must make one admission, and that is, that without the Land League the Act of 1881 would not now be on the Statute Book.' As another million of Irish men and women have fled from Ireland since that Land Act of 1881 came on the Statute Book, and as Conservative and Liberal Governments for the past dozen years have been desperately driven to offer the use of British credit to the tune of £200,000,000, if necessary, in order to relieve Ireland and Great Britain from the consequences of that same Act of 1881, I do not enter into the examination of the fundamental value of Mr. Gladstone's defence of the Land League. The fact remains that the Land League was first taken to the

bosom of those elements of the Liberal party which were most conspicuous in the exclusion of a Napoleon from Westminster Abbey, in supporting Mr. T. P. O'Connor's determination to end the House of Lords, in the ranks of Mr. Bradlaugh in the current and coming controversy, and in the formation and development of that opposition to Mr. Forster which, gradually dominating the Cabinet itself, drove Mr. Forster into retirement and extracted Mr. Parnell from the restraints of Kilmainham. In the whole of that movement, with very little of which I sympathised, the skill, the diplomacy, the eloquence of Mr. T. P. O'Connor easily formed the leading feature, and, if Mr. T. P. O'Connor had only been an English member, would have conducted him to high position on the Liberal front bench. I believe that the result of his activity has been indescribably disastrous for Ireland; but that is no reason for omitting from a historical estimate the due recognition of a leading factor in Anglo-Irish politics for quarter of a century. It must also be added that my fundamental maxim of Irish policy towards England: 'That Ireland should interfere in English affairs so long as England interfered in Irish affairs,' was never more persistently exemplified than by the member for Galway and Scotland Ward, although usually in a direction which lay outside my wishes for my country's future.

Officially and practically, the Parnellites were my unfriends from the start of the new Parliament, and they were soon to be my bitter enemies. There were still, however, until the great lowering of the franchise in 1885, unsuppressed sections of National opinion in Ireland, and I could often muster on many questions as many supporters as the figure-head of the Land League. Besides, on the general business of opposition to the actual Government of England—until it was Tory—I had the invaluable assistance of the Fourth party. It was, indeed, quite superfluous on my part to suggest matter of hostilities against the Cabinet to Lord Randolph Churchill. For the facilitation of Irish interference in British business, the Fourth

party was a gift of the Celtic Providence. Very frequently, also, I had the additional satisfaction of following my conscience as well as satisfying my resentment, in becoming leagued with the lively legion of the member for Woodstock. On the Bradlaugh case, for example, I fought the Government from start to finish, and my utmost activity was a feeble index of the depth of my convictions on the ground of conflict.

The Fourth party—which, as Sir Henry Lucy's 'Memories of Eight Parliaments' attests, took its name from its coming into the public vision immediately after I had claimed the position of 'a Third party in the House' for the members from Ireland—will be mainly associated with the dashing leadership, the remorseless wit and virulence, the untiring action, the versatile talent of Lord Randolph Churchill. It is also in the politics of most countries useful to be the son of a great noble. The formative thought, the generous inspiration, the higher strategy, the wealth of knowledge, belonged, above all, to Mr. John Gorst, who had precisely that quality of intense sympathy with the popular masses which is the permanent want of the modern Conservatives. There was the spirit of Young Englandism at its best in the heart and mind of John Gorst. Had the Conservative party been capable of assimilating all his noble and human impulses, we might have a golden age; *quod est absurdum*, as Tadpole and Taper remarked in a vernacular version. Sir Henry Drummond Wolff was a kindly and alert nature, full of precedents, full of expedients. Mr. Arthur Balfour was a member of the Fourth party in the body, while always communing in the spirit with the Conservative front bench. Witty, judicious, observant, latent, uncompromised, not too much of an insurgent ever to draw the lightning, enough of an objector to heighten the value of his approbation, he trod with graceful freedom the *via media* between decorous independence and official responsibility. During five years, as he sat on the fourth seat of the front bench below the gangway, and I upon the fourth seat of the second, Mr. Arthur Balfour was more directly under my

view than any other member of the House. With all his judicious reticence, he was a good comrade to the Fourth party, without ceasing to maintain his succession to more permanent honours. Drummond Wolff started the Fourth party; Gorst made it; Churchill led it; Balfour adorned it. *Si monumentum quaeris, circumspice*. It shattered the ancient Liberalism in its loftiest representative. It exposed the official Conservatism to the laughing examination of an outside world, which never will forget the sight of dry bones and withered pretensions ruthlessly revealed to universal ridicule. It taught the masses that they were indispensable even to Toryism, and put them on the track of finding salvation in themselves. The repulsion caused by Land Leaguism, the passing fury against the pro-Boers, seemed to lift the Knights of the Quarter Sessions again into the saddle for a tedious season. In vain. The spirits of a Tory democracy, which may not possibly be Tory, will never again be conjured back to the dole and the pint pot. It is by no accident that another Churchill presents an exaggerated imitation. When out of all the possibilities of the Fourth party there was chosen a delicate expediency instead of human sympathies, there arose inevitably the imminence of Conservative ruin.

The record of the Bradlaugh crisis has been given to the world by Liberal authorities. Mr. Morley, now Lord Morley, in his 'Life of Gladstone,' Mr. Herbert Paul, in his rival volumes to Mr. McCarthy's 'Our Own Times,' have described the contest with such intense belief in the incomparable superiority of the Liberal view, that their treatment of the other side follows as a matter of course. Neither of them describes what gave its sternly earnest character to the opposition against Mr. Bradlaugh's appearance in the House. Mr. Morley mentioned, indeed, that Mr. Bradlaugh had been in trouble with the Courts over the publication of a book condemned as obscene. That was not the half, nor the tenth, of the story. As I was going down to Charing Cross Station on my way to the House one afternoon,

first one and then another, and then other children and young boys and girls came running up to me and other passers-by, crying: 'Here you are, sir. The "Fruits of Philosophy" for sixpence. Nothing left out. Only sixpence. Only sixpence.' Bradlaugh had published a cheap edition of the beastly and abominable 'Guide to Safe Lust,' and had given it to swarms of children of the newspaper boy and flower girl class to sell at the London railway stations. Bradlaugh afterwards explained that this was done to establish freedom of printing, or something of the sort. I bought from these children outside Charing Cross Station half a dozen copies of the abomination, and brought them to the House, and showed and gave them to members. I gave two copies to Sir Robert Fowler, afterwards Lord Mayor of London. I gave a copy to Sir Henry Drummond Wolff. I gave a copy to Lord Randolph Churchill. What Lord Randolph did immediately was characteristic of the quick decision of his acts in his prime. He left the House of Commons on the spot, and getting out of the Underground at Charing Cross and Blackfriars Bridge, found the same groups of miserable children engaged in the same infamous trade, a thousandfold dishonouring to their youth and ignorance; heard the filthy little jokes of the degraded little agents for Bradlaugh's wares; bought a number of 'Fruits,' taking care to buy a different copy from a different child-vendor; and returned to the House with his proofs of one of the most hideous degradations of poor children and outrages on public decency which the most debased age and country could ever produce.

The question now before us was, Were we to favour or tolerate the very slightest deviation from the strict law and rule of Parliament in order to allow the author of that act to take his seat in our midst? I am not going into the analysis of Bradlaugh's ideas of justification. I am not going to convince anybody who cannot be conscientiously convinced. As a cosmopolitan traveller and student, I am accustomed to strange sights, strange customs, strange theories. What I did in 1880 and 1881, I would do again.

The most of the men who acted with me, Arthur O'Connor, Lord Randolph and his party, Sir Robert Fowler, General Burnaby and his friends, the Right Hon. Beresford Hope and his friends, would do it all over again, I believe, under the same circumstances. As an Irishman, I simply laughed at the zeal of any part of the House 'to respect the mandate of Mr. Bradlaugh's electors and not to dictate the choice of a constituency.' When the electors of the constituency of Tipperary had elected, only a couple of years before, Mr. O'Donovan Rossa as their parliamentary representative, the election was quashed because O'Donovan Rossa was at loggerheads with the established law. When the same Irish constituency elected Mr. John Mitchell, their choice was again set aside, because Mitchell had been condemned thirty years before; and the House of Commons considered that his offence was still unredeemed. In the case of Bradlaugh, the law of Parliament said that he must take the oath in 'the Name of God,' and Bradlaugh had deliberately informed the House of Commons that the Name of God was 'an unmeaning sound' to him. If he had kept his wretched blasphemy to himself, it was nothing to us. But he wanted, out of sheer bravado, to make the Commons the witness of his open treatment of the Name of God as 'an unmeaning sound.' That was not taking the parliamentary oath. That was openly and designedly mocking and besmirching it, and trying to make us parties to the blasphemy. The violation of the law was patent. It was the business of the constituency of Northampton to respect the law in their choice of a representative, just as much as it was the business of the constituency of Tipperary. The case against the elect of Northampton was worse than against the elect of Tipperary. The convictions which invalidated Rossa and Mitchell were imposed by others. Bradlaugh had deliberately broken the law by wanton wilfulness and ostentatious bravado. And we were to condone this violation of the law, in order to admit to a seat in the legislature the man who was hiring helpless and perverted children to sell the 'Fruits' at sixpence a

copy only, to young and old, to girls and schoolboys, to married and single, outside the doors of the public railway stations? Certainly not!

I denied emphatically, and Mr. Arthur O'Connor with me—Mr. Arthur O'Connor spoke with remarkable power and elevation of sentiment—that there was the slightest analogy, as Mr. Bright contended, with the case of Irish Catholics in the old days. The Irish Catholics did not come up and say, like the elect of Northampton: 'Here is an oath which attacks my convictions, but I am prepared to take it all the same as a string of unmeaning sounds.' The Irish Catholics would not occupy to-day their stainless position, if they had declared themselves ready to make the declaration against the Papacy or the declaration against the Sacrament of the Altar, on the lines adopted by the elect of Northampton. I protested against the attempt, even by the distinguished leader of the House, to ignore distinctions which were patent to every other eye. We had been referred to the law-courts where the elect of Northampton had appeared on various unsavoury occasions. We found it expressly recorded that the elect of Northampton had expressly declared that 'an oath was not binding on him, as he did not believe in God nor in the sanctions of morality.' I added that the peculiar and revolting circumstances with which the elect of Northampton had chosen to surround his case, did not assuredly diminish our responsibility for lowering the barriers of morality in favour of such an applicant. On May 21, 1880, I had expressly raised the question of Bradlaugh's sale of pornographic literature as the very gravest bar to any exceptional favour by the House in his regard. Now it was not merely the legal condemnation of a book, comparatively high-priced and intended for a limited class of readers, as the current narratives of current historians imply; it was the sale of a cheap and popular edition by the hands of children, at our street corners, which formed the ground of my determined hostility, and the ground of the determined hostility of the majority of the House. I

must be allowed to quote a decisive passage in proof of this fact, a statement which was endorsed by the longest roll of cheers that I ever heard in Parliament, and at the close of which one of the most respected members of the English Church present in the House grasped my hands with the exclamation : ‘ Accept, Mr. O’Donnell, the sincere thanks of a Christian Englishman.’ Did that look as if he was indifferent to the moral question involved ? In the minds of a great body of men, who were neither bigots nor fanatics, the traffic in such a book by means of children’s agency was simply unpardonable. To quote from the report in the *Times*, I find that, after repudiating any similarity between the case before us and the case of the Irish Catholics, who disdained to repeat an oath in which they could not believe, I went on to refer to the special gravamen in these terms :—

Were they to suppose that any person, pursuing any occupation, possessing any kind of reputation, getting in for a constituency under any auspices, was forthwith entitled in all cases to enter that House, even when he declared that the forms of the House were an idle and meaningless mockery ? (Hear, hear.) Suppose that a man of unenviable reputation, who went round the country preaching the most subversive and the most disgusting doctrines (hear), and who, dubious as his trade was, felt it necessary, as more honest traffickers did, to obtain a larger advertisement ; suppose it occurred to him that it would be useful for the sort of business in which he was engaged to be able to print after his name the letters ‘ M.P.’ upon the title-page of some vile and abominable pamphlet (cheers), that was sold in the byways and lanes of our great cities, that was addressed not only to the mature judgment of men and women, but was thrust by agents into the hands of youths and maidens of tender years, that inculcated practices of the foulest debauchery upon the youngest and most susceptible minds, that, as appealing to the community at large, would reduce Christian, Jewish, human wedlock and human love to something lower than the union of beast and beast ; and suppose that it occurred to this man that he would be able to secure this advertisement by writing to some paper of large circulation that he would only consider the forms of

the House as a meaningless mockery? This was what was involved in the casuistry of the responsible Government of a Christian people (cheers), that such an open announcement of the most immoral course was to pass muster in that House with the oaths and solemn affirmations of honourable men. (Cheers.)

Were those sentiments, were those cheers, mere expressions of a desire to embarrass the Cabinet of a political party? The thing was incredible under any circumstances. In spite of the influence of Mr. T. P. O'Connor and Mr. Parnell, who ranged themselves on the side which would admit the representative of a constituency, no matter what might be the forms of the House—and I do not impugn the sincerity of their views—in spite of the Land League influence, the large majority of the Irish members voted in the same lobby as myself, and rejected the Government theory. Very naturally the British chroniclers of these events see nothing and nobody but the Fourth party and the brilliant fighters below the Conservative gangway. The simple fact that one of our most important divisions against the Gladstone Government in the Bradlaugh affair was only carried by three votes, that thirty Irishmen voted against Bradlaugh, while twenty did not dare to vote at all in consequence of the strong Catholic indignation in Ireland, though wishing to support Messrs. T. P. O'Connor and Parnell; this plain fact of statistics shows that the opposition to Bradlaugh would have been useless in the absence of the Irish vote. Just as the significance of the Irish vote against Bradlaugh is ignored or minimised, so the influence of Parnell's pro-Bradlaugh attitude on the Catholic Episcopate in Ireland does not seem to be even suspected. Yet it was a crucial matter in the development of Parnell's position. If the bishops had confidence in Parnell, even the sin of the flesh would have met with more pity than anger. I was in constant communication with most important members of the ecclesiastical body during the whole of the struggle: Cardinals Manning and McCabe, Bishops McEvilly and Dorrian. I was

regarded by the bishops as the Catholic leader of the opposition to Bradlaugh. I had stood by Drummond Wolff from the first moment of his intervention in the case. As the *Annual Register* records of the opening fight on May 11: 'In the course of the short debate, Mr. Gorst and Mr. O'Donnell supported Sir H. D. Wolff against the opinion of the leaders of the Conservatives and the Home Rulers, thus in the first debate of the session foreshadowing the formation of a combination,' etc. Cardinal Manning, who had been my friend ever since I arrived in London, naturally received from me the most copious explanations of everything which was going on behind the scenes of set debate; and he addressed warning after warning to the Irish bishops not to suffer a public insult to the Divine Name by any one whom they could influence. Parnell's persistence in following a Radical lead on a matter where an Irish leader would be expected to consult Irish convictions, was judged with frank detestation. He was known not to be an earnest Protestant. What was he? Such questions, if beside the course of secular politics, influence ecclesiastics; and Irish politics without ecclesiastics have yet to be invented.

If, however, Parnell was damning himself irretrievably with Maynooth, his action on the Bradlaugh case was winning him deep sympathy and admiration among the rank and file of Mr. Gladstone's party. They admired his pluck. They admired his toleration. They were loath to believe evil of such a sound Liberal. He was more likely to be the victim of circumstances than the author of wrong. Even when Mr. Gladstone declared against him for a season, he never lost the admiration of great Liberals, who were prepared to sacrifice even Liberal ministers in order to give Parnell fair play. For much of this support, it cannot be denied that Mr. T. P. O'Connor had deserved the gratitude of the leader whom he led—in England, that is to say. When Parnell set foot on Kingstown pier, other hands were laid upon his collar. Not that there was radical alteration even then and there. But there was another factor in

England of first class importance in the development of Parnell's relations with the Liberal party, a factor which was soon to assume extraordinary authority, and which possessed almost every qualification for the direction of men. This was Mr. Charles Russell, afterwards to be Lord Chief Justice of England. A great Venetian diplomatist and statesman of the great ages of Venetian magnificence returned to life in the frame of this strong and subtle lawyer from the North of Ireland, who combined something of the powers of fence and adaptability of a gifted race long habituated to subjection with the iron and unsparing will of the dominators of Ulster. Almost from the first day Russell was visibly the friend of Parnell. He owed everything dearest to a great English lawyer to the patronage of Parnell. Beaten already on a former occasion in his attempt to enter Parliament by election for Dundalk—in spite of his uncle being president of Maynooth—he would have been beaten again in 1880 by the same opponent, Mr. Philip Callan, but for the passionate hostility of the Parnellites to Callan, the friend of Butt. Even with Parnellite support, the transfer of a couple of dozen votes would have left Russell outside of Parliament, outside of the Attorney-Generalship, outside of the highest hopes of a great and honourable ambition. I had supported Callan, simply as Home Ruler, against Russell the Liberal, when Home Rule should be the supreme issue. Between the individuals there could be no comparison in point of reputation. Mr. Charles Russell never concealed from me his unsleeping resentment. And my recommendation of Callan, if it failed in Dundalk, had helped to return Callan as member for the County Louth, Callan whom he had struck with fist as well as voice at the hustings of Dundalk! Russell supported Parnell on the Compensation for Disturbance Bill in 1880. The friendship of the two had increased to such an extent,—in spite of all that was happening in Ireland during 1880, 1881, and 1882,—that in 1883 Mr. Charles Russell went to America with a letter of introduction from Mr. Parnell to an Irish-American judge in New York. For some

reasons this letter of introduction deserves notice. I take it as it is published in the 'Life of Lord Russell of Killowen,' by Mr. Barry O'Brien.

HOUSE OF COMMONS:

August 13, 1883.

MY DEAR SIR,

Permit me to introduce to you Mr. Russell, who is visiting America. He is anxious to learn the status, political and social, and the views of our leading and representative countrymen in the States; and although not a member of our party, he has always done what he could, both in and out of Parliament, from his own point of view, to serve the interests of Ireland. Need I say how much pleased I shall be if you can do anything to further the objects of his visit?

I am, my dear Sir,

Yours very truly,

CHAS. S. PARNELL.

The Lord Chief Justice SHEA, New York.

When the future Attorney-General of the Liberal party asked and obtained this letter, five years—five horrible years—of the agrarian revolution had already passed. In this very year of 1883 Parnell had been fiercely denounced by Mr. Forster, on his retirement from the Chief Secretaryship. Parnell had contemptuously observed that Forster's successor, Mr. Trevelyan, was a more bungling tyrant than even Forster, adding that Lord Spencer was engaged upon 'the congenial work of the gallows in Ireland.' Almost on the day on which Mr. Russell's letter of introduction from Parnell was written, Mr. Healy, now M.P. for Monaghan, had declared, August 18, 1883, 'that it was war between the two countries just as much as ever, and that the Irish members were the exponents of the hatred and contempt which the people of Ireland felt for her Majesty's Government.' Yet the distinguished lawyer, who, within a couple of years was to be Attorney-General, asked and obtained the foregoing letter of introduction from the 'leader of the country at war with England,' as preparation for a voyage to America, whence that leader's principal

revenues were forwarded by Mr. Patrick Ford, who wanted 'fifty Irishmen' to select 'a windy night' for setting London and the homes of six millions of men, women, and children in a blaze of destroying fire. If Mr. Gladstone could have realised the situation in his own party as early as 1880, he would have found that his entire left wing, from Mr. Chamberlain to Mr. Bradlaugh, were on terms of large sympathy with Parnellite ideals, that distinguished members of his Centre, like Mr. Charles Russell, were preparing further developments, and that his right wing, the solid and sturdy ranks of the Farmers' Alliance men, had exceedingly little compassion on the sufferings of the Irish owners of landed estate. The parliamentary state of the British Government in the session of 1880 was notoriously so squeezable, that the first thing Parnell had to say to the Land League branches was that if they were sufficiently 'active' during the coming winter, the next session of Parliament would bring them a Land Act proportionate to their activity. They were 'active.' And the Land Act came, as predicted. The poor devils of Irish landlords set up a mighty wail,—'Was this the way the Union Parliament was rewarding them?' It was. But they went on loving the Union all the same. They were pure loyalists out of fine feeling. The Land Leaguers were red rebels out of commercial calculation. It paid best. The plight of the Irish gentry was the inevitable consequence of historical data. When Mr. Pitt suppressed the most loyal and conservative Government and Constitution of Ireland which could possibly exist, the day was certain to come when the gentry, being few, would be of less value in party countings of votes than the tenantry who were many. The question of the majority being the supreme question in party government, the fate of the Irish gentry was pre-ordained, as Scotch theology would say, from the beginning . . . of the Act of Union. During the whole period of the agitation—which, of course, goes on to-day as merrily as ever—there were innumerable articles in the English

newspapers directing pained attention to the case of Irish landowners who had no conception of the rights of property beyond the extraction of rent. I do not remember seeing any newspaper which recalled the fact that English legislation had summarily sold up 3000 old Irish landlords who were ruined in the famine, and had divided their estates among 7000 new landlords, who put their savings as grocers, attorneys, moneylenders, into Irish land with the object of making a commercial profit on their investment by tenant-driving. The ignorance of Irish history, which is the glory of the British editor, was common to Russell and Parnell. I have already spoken of the blank and abysmal ignorance of Parnell on Irish history, ancient and modern. Russell's biographer admits that his biographee was a peer of Parnell in this respect: 'I was surprised to see how little he knew of Irish political history. . . . Russell knew almost nothing of the political history of any country, including his own. Of distinguished Irishmen, none probably knew less than Charles Russell and Charles Stewart Parnell' ('Life,' p. 138). The admiring biographer piously adds: 'Their intuitions enabled them to dispense with the knowledge of books.' Almost every leader of the Land League was quite as ignorant of the history of Ireland as Russell and Parnell.

There is really little more to be said of the parliamentary action of the members from Ireland in the session of 1880. Within a far more limited sphere, they occasionally rivalled the Fourth party in constant and exhaustive criticism of the legislation and administration of the new Government. Towards the end of the session, indeed, the leader of the House, in the absence through ill-health of Mr. Gladstone—Lord Hartington, namely—felt called to institute a comparison between members of the Third and Fourth parties which seemed to indicate that the recent beginners were quite capable of holding their own in point of talk with the veterans of Irish debate. I may give Lord Hartington's statistics in tabular form:—

THIRD PARTY

Mr. Biggar . . .	58 speeches . . .	14 questions.
Mr. A. O'Connor . .	55 speeches . . .	2 questions.
Mr. Finnegan . . .	47 speeches . . .	10 questions.

FOURTH PARTY

Mr. Gorst	105 speeches . . .	85 questions.
Lord R. Churchill . .	74 speeches . . .	21 questions.
Sir H. D. Wolff . . .	68 speeches . . .	34 questions.

For every purpose of annoyance and opposition of an effective sort the Fourth party was to remain immeasurably superior to Mr. Parnell's Land Leaguers. The reason was simple. The array of out-of-works, who had been gathered by the Land League into its parliamentary fold, could, with the fewest exceptions, harp on only one string. Take them from the grievances of Ireland, as they conceived them, and they must be mute as fish. They knew nothing else. The precise statements which enchanted Ballyraftery and Ballymurphy were produced to enthrall the House. When Mr. Sexton or Mr. O'Brien wandered from the Hibernian theme, or found no opportunity of repeating the infliction, they could only move to report progress or to adjourn. When they had alternated these unvarying motions for a few hours or days, and seemed disposed to continue the exhilarating see-saw for a week or a month, the House very thoughtfully, instead of bottling up the particular offenders, bottled up itself, and abolished all that constituted the liberty of Parliament, instead of solely suppressing the liberty of the monotonous confederacy. The Fourth party were men of more varied information. Gorst and Wolff had an immense knowledge of public affairs, and Churchill and Balfour—Balfour being highly educated into the bargain—were good listeners and apt improvers. From the cost of the Sunday slops of a blue-jacket, to the highest relations of civilisation and religion, from the rangership of a royal park to the diplomacy of Teheran or Constantinople, they flitted with facility equal

to their omniscience. The answers of a dozen secretaries and under-secretaries of state, fed by hundreds of clerks in fifty departments, only whetted the appetite of their patriotic inquiries. If information were not forthcoming from a harassed Cabinet, they supplied it at such a bewildering rate and of such a damaging character, that every minister sprang to his legs to assure them of endless willingness to reply, and reply, till the vacation or longer. You may close ignorance, and even business; but intelligent hostility is for ever breaking out, or in, at another place. So long as I had the Fourth party to co-operate with, the incapacity of the Third only called for a regret founded in distant memories. Personally I took no interest in the fate of obstruction. Obstruction had never been necessary for my work, except by way of occasional advertisement of grievance or occasional delay of measure. I had obstructed too much on many occasions, because Biggar and Parnell, being both about equally ignorant of every subject under heaven, simply could do nothing else, and I had to keep time with them, because I had nobody else.

At the close of the parliamentary session of 1880 the members from Ireland were free to return to the bosoms of their constituencies, or to devote their efforts to further activity. Though Parnell had been elected chairman of the remains of the Home Rule party by less than one-fourth of the total representatives of Ireland, the American money and the paralysis of the law made the Land League master of the public peace and private security. Though the Parnellites had refused to support the third reading of the Compensation for Disturbance Bill, its rejection was treated as provocation by the Lords which required proportionate revenge. The anti-social war known as the Boycott was organised with the last cruelty and without remorse. It should be mentioned as essential to the understanding of those times that the boycott, more than the Land League as conceived by the New Departure, was the invention or adaptation of Michael Davitt. Just as

the blind Socialism of the Land League, with its crude ignorance of the conditions of agricultural prosperity, was the gift to Ireland of a Lancashire mill-hand, who had not seen Ireland since his infancy ; so also was it the same ideas of lawless organisation and revenge which had prevailed in a desperate section of English workmen that were now to become the boycott. All the horrors of the boycott, the blacklisting of the blacklegs, the rattening of the victim's goods and belongings, are to be found in the report of the Commission on the Trade Union crimes at Sheffield committed by Broadhead and his accomplices. All Irishmen who hesitated to obey the League were to be made blacklegs to their fellow-men. Their property in stock and gear was to be exposed to the same rattening, the doing of cruel and cowardly damage and hurt. The boycott was Broadheadism applied to agricultural communities, to the stock and crop, the homestead and cattle of the farmer and the shepherd. It was certainly Michael Davitt, the mill-hand, brooding on revenge against a hated class, who brought the boycott into contemporary Ireland. It was enthusiastically embraced by Parnell, but it came from the mind and speech of Davitt. Speaking at a meeting at Knockaroo, in Queen's County, about January 22, 1880, Davitt gave this advice to the Land Leaguers of the Queen's County :—

If such a traitor to your cause enters this part of the country, why, keep your eyes fixed on him—point him out—and if a pig of his fall into the boghole, let it lie there.

The Sheffield rattening applied to agricultural relations, here it is. Broadhead saw something amiss happening to the tools or the workshop of the 'blackleg' to Trade Unionism. Davitt saw the pig of the 'traitor' to Land Leaguism left to fall into a boghole. Davitt's entire contribution to the solution of Irish land problems consisted in the application of Lancashire and Yorkshire 'bad strikes' to the extortion of revolutionary desiderata in Ireland. A Communist and Socialist pure and simple, he saw a fair vision of the Irish people organised in agricultural

and industrial co-factories, administered by labour syndicates and secretaries instead of the obsolete personages of individual ownership, and presided over by a grand president of labour, who possessed an extraordinary resemblance to Michael Davitt. It was as editor of a 'Labour World' that Davitt was to denounce the moral backslidings of Parnell; but long before the recognition of that distressing turpitude in the Land League figure-head, Mr. Parnell's invincible dislike to the ruin of more landlords than was strictly necessary to his own exaltation had been the source of the bitterest repinings in the mouth of the Land League's father. Like other communists, Mr. Davitt could be inconsistent. I remember the pleasure and profit which he derived from a favoured allotment of Lipton shares that he was enabled to sell in a rising market, just like any capitalist speculator at Capel Court or on Wall Street. As innocent of history as Parnell himself, he was impregnable to refutation, for his assertions were quite independent of the evidence of facts. His gentle and affectionate nature rejoiced in the good fortune which, through a considerable heritage from a relative of his wife, had, as he expressed it, 'placed his children beyond the misery in which their father had been brought up.' The saying was creditable to his parental heart, but what about 'the black curse of inherited capital'?

The next, the authoritative, professor of rattening and blacklisting in the Ireland of 1880, was Mr. C. S. Parnell, M.P., himself. In his ruin-making speech at Ennis on September 19, 1880, Parnell expounded the programme of civil hate and fratricide for the coming winter. The black nights of winter were the sacred season of Ribbon methods. In the same sentence Parnell let loose the Ribbonman, and expressed his contemptuous sense of the sort of persuasion which can move English opinion and government. Perhaps the most prominent feature of Parnell's attitude towards the British Parliament was his undisguised conviction that it could be most effectually influenced by brutal and criminal facts. 'So much violence, so much reform.' Raising his

voice and fixing his features in a mask of rigid determination, he cried to the assembled crowd: 'Depend upon it that the measure of the Land Bill next session will be the measure of your activity and energy this winter.' Parnell went on to explain the code of hate which was to fill that winter's activity. The recalcitrant to the unwritten code, 'your unwritten code of laws,' was to be 'shown' on the roadside, in the street, at the shop counter, in the fair, in the market-place, 'even in the house of worship.' He was to be 'isolated from his kind as if he were a leper of old.' Parnell foully maligned the days of old. No leper could be treated with the refusal of food and drink, the refusal of fire and water, the pitiless scorn and hatred which Parnell invoked against the victims of the unwritten code of laws. There was the leper hospital for the afflicted in the Middle Ages. There was care, kindly and tender, during the suffering life. There was the solemn rite of Christian burial after death. The sorrowing mother was to have the very coffin refused to her dead child by the executants of Parnell's devilish decree. A million of men and women have departed from Ireland since Parnell pretended that his unwritten code was meant to keep them on their native soil!

Almost the same day—only four days previously—Mr. John Dillon explained to the farmers and others of Kildare, that rent must not be paid even out of 'good harvests,' that the way to get 'nine in ten' of the people to join the Land League, was to send 'two men who were not afraid of any man' to visit the frightened farmers in their homes.

If you pay rent and arrears of rent this year, then the good harvest will go to the landlords. . . . We ask of you in every townland two men who are not afraid of any man. Give each of these a book with the names of every man in the townland. They will go round to all these men and ask every one of them to join the Land League; and in this way every man who refuses is known to the people. I believe that every nine in ten will join.

If any Irish man or woman was to refuse obedience to the

visit of the men 'who were not afraid of any man'—peaceable characters!—then the independent man or woman was to be 'shown,' and the result of being 'shown' was to be isolated worse, far worse, than a 'leper of old.' There was certainly no country of the entire world, outside of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, where such menaces could be openly made against the population, as an arranged part of a general system of operations, without prompt suppression by the supreme law of states. In the year 1878, the year before the Land League, there had been only 301 offences of an agrarian nature in Ireland. In this year, 1880, the year of the Ennis speech, there were 2590, no less than 100 being murders, attempted murders, and firings into inhabited houses of families, perhaps the most hideous crime of all. There had been no change in the Land Laws. There had only been the coming of the League of the Ennis speech. In describing the historical transactions of the members from Ireland at this period, the difficulty is to prevent the narrative becoming a description of the non-performance of the fundamental duties of civilised government towards the taxpayers, who expect protection in return for their support of the army, police, and judiciary. Imagine any other land of Europe. Imagine a Prussian, an Austrian, an Italian member of the legislature, collecting crowds of the people, telling them to treat their fellow-subjects worse than lepers, telling them to make property worthless, law without force, and justice without effect. How long would that be allowed to continue? Hardly the time for the three taps of the drum, or the three *sommations* of the representative of authority. Here is what followed in Ireland. 'It rained outrages. Cattle were houghed and maimed; tenants who paid unjust rents, or who took farms from which others had been evicted, were dragged out of their beds, assaulted. Bands of peasants scoured the country, firing into the houses of obnoxious individuals. . . . Murder was committed. A reign of terror had in truth commenced' ('Life of Parnell,' ii. 247). It is an admirer of the leper-hunter who writes this summary

of the sequel of the Ennis speech. The truth of the matter was, that it was not the Land League, but British party government, which was tying the hands of responsible authority. Ireland was being reduced to savagery, because the 'state of siege,' as Europeans would call it, would hurt the feelings of 'the British allies' of Pat Ford's stipendiaries. Mr. Gladstone wrote to the Viceroy in November that he must go on trusting to 'the ordinary law'—that is, 'trial by jury,' and so forth—because repressive measures could only be carried 'in the teeth of two-thirds of the representatives of Ireland, without taking British allies into account.' But it was the Land League that had abolished trial by jury. When a criminal organisation threatens with ruin every juror who fails to acquit criminals, and when the entire class of jurors is exposed to such threats and to the accomplishment of the threats, trial by jury has been temporarily abolished by the criminal association. If pirates capture a town, you do not accept the findings of a jury of pirates. A court of Thugs possesses no heaven-sent authority to try Thugs, or to compensate the victims of Thugs. If the Parnellite insurrection had come out with rifle and cannon, it would have been an affair for treatment by force. Did the fact that it came out with houghing knives and shotguns at night give it privileges of sacrosanct toleration denied to soldierly rebels like Emmet and Tone, and the Fenians? The men of the Fenian Brotherhood had been chased by horse and foot, imprisoned without Habeas Corpus. They had not plundered 'to the value of a single sixpence.' They had not menaced the 'houses of the gentry.' No Fenian complains of the military measures of the British Government. It is the law of war. They complained, and complained rightly, of punishment as felons and with felons. The men of the Land League Brotherhood never faced the flag of England, never turned a weapon, nor directed a march, against English soldiers. The Land League Brotherhood only attacked Irish men and women, only mutilated dumb animals, only skulked in the dark of winter, only fired into inhabited houses out of the sheltering night. But Mr.

Gladstone admitted that to proceed against them as public enemies would be opposed by 'British allies' within the Parliament. The author of the Ennis speech was to deliver 'letters of introduction' to a future Chief Justice of England. He was to be admired 'for what he had said and done' by an actual Chief Justice of England. It was easy for the Land League to effect a few thousand outrages yearly. The British Parliament had usurped the place of the Irish Parliament, and this was the result. As the British Government could give no better government to Ireland than this, it had better walk out of Ireland without delay. There were plenty of sound elements in Ireland itself both to ensure reform and to protect life, liberty, and property.

Personally, at this period I only knew enough about the Land League to refuse to join it, and to protest against the deliberate excommunication passed against all owners of landed estate. I encountered fierce denunciation for a phrase in a letter of protest in the *Freeman's Journal*, in which I maintained that 'there was Irish patriotism in other county mansions as well as Avondale,' which was the residence of the Parnells. But I did not fully realise the connexion between what was happening and various organisations, until the course of my own experiences during, and after, the trial of my libel action against the *Times*, eight years afterwards. I had learned a good deal more between 1880 and 1885, when I withdrew from Parliament, than I knew in 1880. I believed till a comparatively recent period that the disconnexion between Parnell himself and the worst complicities was considerably wider than in reality. But I believed always, and believe still, that Parnell considered himself to be a moderate politician; and I am quite convinced that he would never go further than was necessary to rivet the attention and enlist the co-operation of the English governing classes,—whom he described habitually in terms of amused contempt,—that he never had the slightest intention of realising the Devoy or the Davitt ideal, that he thought as poorly of the governing ability of his Irish followers as Lord Randolph Churchill

or Mr. Arthur Balfour could do,—being, in fact, very like Wolfe Tone in this respect,—that if he had lived with undiminished influence to witness the passing of such a Gladstone Home Rule Bill as that of 1893, he would only have consented to assume the functions of premier of the sub-Parliament at Dublin, on condition of a semi-permanent leave of absence in England. Very probably what would attract him most would be the position of leader of the Irish delegation within the Imperial Parliament. At the head of the eighty members whom Mr. Gladstone's second Bill gave as an Imperial representation to Ireland, Mr. Parnell would have objects of ambition far more congenial to his love of aloofness from Irishmen than could be his lot in Dublin. The Irish part of Mr. Gladstone's Home Rule made the 'Old House in College Green' look far too like a popular edition of the Dublin City Hall for the satisfaction of Parnell or myself. I notice that this view of the English tastes and English ambitions of the Ennis boycotter was developed in December 1883, in an article in the *Pall Mall Gazette* attributed to that skilful appraiser of characters, Mr. John Morley. In this paper, Mr. Parnell is 'the young Irish squire of English education and American descent. . . . He is not only the uncrowned king of Ireland, but he aspires, not without solid ground for his ambition, to play the part of a parliamentary Warwick, and to pose as the master of the situation in the Imperial Parliament.'

The leaders of the National Fenians who censured Devoy and Davitt for the New Departure, and twitted them with helping parliamentarianism more than they knew, were certainly accurate in this opinion: that Parnell was trying to use the Fenians without the slightest intention of conceding to the Fenians any reciprocating use of him. Unfortunately for the balancing juggler, there was a point of unstable equilibrium, at which he cut it too fine after all. Still, Parnell was entitled to claim that for a marvellously long period he did succeed in playing his own game and keeping relatively clear of the worst connexions. Since his

release from Kilmainham in 1882, for instance, down to his death in 1891—seven difficult years—he managed, as we shall see, to levy the American tribute without ever revisiting America. At least he avoided personal contact with those hands. He only suffered pollution by proxy. He sent the lieutenants. They were less squeamish. He sent the lieutenants to orate and gesticulate. It was the lieutenants who shared the sinister symposia of the *Irish World* office, who exchanged sinister counsels with Ford and Rossa and Egan fresh from the Phoenix Park. It was the lieutenants who returned from the embraces of the skirmishers to the embraces of English parliamentary celebrities. For seven years Parnell only soiled his fingers by proxy. He was hounded to his grave; and the lieutenants entered permanently into the hospitality of premiers and the formation of majorities.

END OF VOL. I

Date Due

APR 7 '58

JUN 19 1970

JUN 17 1970 X

JUL 1 1970

JUN 26 1970 8

NOV 9 1971

NOV 9 1971 X

NOV 23 1971

NOV 23 1971 4

MAD 13 1990 AS

APR 08 1994

CILITY



1

Library Bureau Cat. No. 1137

UNIVERSITY OF CA. RIVERSIDE LIBRARY



3 1210 01074 5501

